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ABSTRACT

This document presents major presentations and conference highlights from a February 2000 conference on providing positive academic and behavioral supports to students with behavior disorders to maximize education in the least restrictive environment as required under the 1997 amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The texts of five presentations by keynote speakers are provided, which include: (1) "Creating Safe, Effective, and Nurturing Schools: New Opportunities and New Challenges for Serving All Students" (Mary Magee Quinn); (2) "Curricular and Instructional Recommendations for Creating Safe, Effective, and Nurturing School Environments for All Students" (Brenda Scheuermann); (3) "Establishing and Promoting Disciplinary Practices at the Building Level That Ensure Safe, Effective, and Nurturing School Environments" (Michael P. George); (4) "Establishing and Promoting Disciplinary Practices at the Classroom and Individual Student Level That Ensure Safe, Effective, and Nurturing Learning Environments" (Timothy Lewis); and (5) "Establishing School Environments That Ensure Positive Professional Relationships" (Lori Korinek). Highlights from the conference's dialogue groups address the following topics: practitioners' perspectives on positive academic and behavioral supports; promoting positive academic and behavioral supports across settings; improving academic and behavioral outcomes for students with emotional and behavioral disorders; redefining the structure and culture of schools; and violence in America. (Individual papers contain references.) (DB)

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Positive Academic and Behavioral Supports: Creating Safe, Effective, and Nurturing Schools for All Students

Highlights from the Forum on Positive Academic and Behavioral Supports

Sponsored by

Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders

Norfolk, VA

February 18–19, 2000

Edited by

Lyndal M. Bullock
University of North Texas
Denton, Texas

Robert A. Gable
Old Dominion University
Norfolk, Virginia

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About the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders (CCBD)

CCBD is an international organization committed to promoting and facilitating the education and general welfare of children and youth with behavioral or emotional disorders. CCBD, whose members include educators, parents, mental health personnel, and a variety of other professionals, actively pursues quality educational services and program alternatives for persons with behavioral disorders, advocates for the needs of such children and youth, emphasizes research and professional growth as vehicles for better understanding behavioral disorders, and provides professional support for persons who are involved with and serve children and youth with behavioral disorders.

In advocating for professionals in the field of behavioral disorders, CCBD (a division of The Council for Exceptional Children) endorses the Standards for Professional Practice and Code of Ethics that was adopted by the Delegate Assembly of The Council for Exceptional Children in 1983.

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  - *Safe Schools: School-Wide Discipline Practices* by Timothy J. Lewis and George Sugai

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PREFACE

The enactment of Public Law 105-17, better known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), in 1997 ushered in a new era in public education. As with prior legislation, schools must ensure that students with disabilities receive a "free, appropriate public education" in the "least restrictive environment." However, emphasis now is on both the general education curriculum and classroom placement, with the requirement that schools justify any other student placement and be accountable with regard to learner outcomes. Previous legislation was strengthened in others ways as well, including the goal to ensure that schools are safe and conducive to learning. IDEA provides a framework to establish disciplinary policies and procedures and encourages school officials to look for alternatives to suspension or explosion. The language of IDEA further stresses the use of positive interventions rather than punitive discipline—measures that teach new behavior and produce long-term positive changes in pupil behavior.

The Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders (CCBD) recognizes that school personnel need to be better prepared to address the various provisions of the 1997 amendments to IDEA. For that reason, we sponsored the "Working Forum on Positive Academic and Behavioral Supports: Creating Safe, Effective, and Nurturing Schools for All Students." The forum was designed to bring together parents, teachers, administrators, local and state agency representatives, and others who work with students with challenging behaviors to learn more about those provisions of IDEA that relate to disciplinary policies and procedures. Given that learning and behavior problems go hand in hand, it is shortsighted to address one and not the other. For that reason, Forum presentations included discussions on ways to create a school environment that supports positive academic and behavioral intervention at the classroom and building levels for all students.

In this monograph, we have attempted to capture the highlights of the Forum—both the expert presentations and the deliberations of participants from around the country. On behalf of CCBD, we trust that you will find the content useful in seeking ways to address the diverse learning and behavior needs of students with emotional or behavioral disorders.

Lyndal M. Bullock and Robert A. Gable
Editors

Creating Safe, Effective, and Nurturing Schools: New Opportunities and New Challenges for Serving All Students

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Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice
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Arguably the most imminent challenge to creating safe, effective, and nurturing schools is the succession of horrendous acts of violence that have plagued our country over the past few school years. Indeed, it is likely that the 1997–1998 and 1998–1999 school years are to be remembered most for the violence that occurred in our schools during that period.

- We will always remember the events of October 1, 1997, when in Pearl, Mississippi, 16-year-old Luke Woodham killed his mother and then went to school, where he shot 10 of his classmates, killing 3.
- We will always remember the events of December 1, 1997, when in West Paducah, Kentucky, 14-year-old Michael Carneal killed three of his schoolmates who were attending a high school prayer meeting.
- We will always remember March 24, 1998, when in Jonesboro, Arkansas, 13-year-old Mitchell Johnson and 11-year-old Andrew Golden opened fire on their schoolyard and killed four of their classmates and one teacher.
- We will always remember the events of April 24, 1998, when in Edinboro, Pennsylvania, 14-year-old Andrew Wurst killed a teacher during a school dance.
- We will always remember the events of May 21, 1998, when in Springfield, Oregon, 15-year-old Kip Kinkel killed his parents, then went to school and shot 24 classmates, killing 2.
- And we will *never* be able to forget the events of April 20, 1999, when in Littleton, Colorado, 17-year-old Dylan Klebold and 18-year-old Eric Harris killed themselves after planning and carrying out a massacre that claimed the lives of 12 classmates and 1 teacher in their high school.

It seems school has become synonymous with violence. Children are afraid to go to school, and their parents are even more afraid to send them. And, as students of Maslow (1954) will attest, a feeling of safety is one of the most basic of human needs. Unless children feel safe at school, they will not be able to learn.

As the title implies, I want to discuss the opportunities and challenges to creating safe, effective, and nurturing schools for all of our nation's children. However, before we can discuss opportunities and challenges, it is important to first get a clear and accurate picture of the situation. We begin by defining the problem and determining just what we are up against. Then, we discuss the opportunities and challenges that this situation introduces.

Defining the Problem

There has been a surge in reports of school-related violence and deaths in recent years. This surge has led many to believe that the United States is currently plagued by a younger generation of predators. Accordingly, schools across the nation are installing metal detectors and video cameras and hiring security personnel to patrol their halls. Indeed, many people in the United States, and perhaps the nation as a whole, are running scared.

To solve a problem, it is necessary to first define it and gather information to help gain a thorough understanding of the parameters of the problem. It is important, in this case, to know just how serious the problem of school safety is. Since the 1992–1993 school year, the National School Safety Center has been collecting and cataloging reports of school-associated violent deaths. Whenever there is a report of a violent death in a

School Year	Number of Deaths
1992–1993	54
1993–1994	51
1994–1995	20
1995–1996	35
1996–1997	25
1997–1998	43
1998–1999	26

Table 1. School-Associated Violent Deaths

school, on school grounds, or at a school function, it becomes part of the Center's database. This includes reports of homicides and suicides by children and adults. The National School Safety Center's report for the 1998–1999 school year recorded a total of 26 deaths. More than half of these deaths, 15 to be exact, happened on one shocking and unforgettable spring day in Littleton, Colorado.

No one would argue that one violent death at school is unacceptable. But what does 26 deaths really mean? Is that a lot? Is that a drastic increase over previous years, as the media would have us believe? The answer is *no*. In fact, school-associated violent deaths have dropped drastically since the 1992–1993 school year, when the National School Safety Center first started keeping such data (www.nssc1.org). Table 1 shows the number of school-related violent deaths per year during the period since data were first collected.

These data should help to put the number 26 into perspective. Granted, one death is too many; but, according to these data, the magnitude of the problem is not as great as the media have depicted. U.S. schools are one of the safest places for our children to be—safer, in fact, than many of their homes. In 1998, there was less than a one in a million chance of suffering a violent death (i.e., a homicide or a suicide) in a U.S. school (Donohue, Schiraldi, & Ziedenberg, 1998), and studies of sample years (1992–1994) show that only 0.62% of the homicides and suicides among children who were of school age were associated with school (Donohue et al., 1998). To further put these figures into perspective, it is estimated that, in 1997, 1,196 children died from maltreatment at home (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1999).

A recent article in *Phi Delta Kappan* pointed out that studies that have tracked a number of indicators of school violence over the past 20 years have concluded: "As was the case 20 years ago, despite public perceptions to the contrary, the current data do not support the claim that there has been a dramatic, overall increase in school-based violence in recent years" (Skiba & Peterson, 1999, p. 373). What we do have is an upsurge in the news media's misrepresentation of reality. It appears that the news media have a fascination with violence. In fact, while homicide rates were down by 20% between 1992 and 1996, reporting of homicides on NBC, ABC, and CBS national news programs increased 721% in the same period (Schiraldi, 1999).

While it is reassuring to know that schools are not as violent as the news media would have the American public believe, because of this irresponsible journalism, children and adults do not feel safe in their schools. Moreover, this distortion of the problem might actually have exacerbated it. The results of a recent Youth Risk Behavior Study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (1997) reveal alarming evidence of this problem. This survey of students in 9th through 12th grades reveals that many children do not feel safe in school. In fact, 4% of the students who responded to this survey said that they had missed 1 or more days of school during the 30-day period preceding the survey because they felt unsafe. More than 7% said they had been threatened or injured with a weapon, and 14.8% had been in a physical fight while on school property in the preceding 12 months. Perhaps the most alarming statistic uncovered by this survey is that 8.5% of the students said they had actually carried a weapon to school at least 1 day during the 30-day period preceding the survey. These statistics make it clear that despite the relative safety of our schools, students do not feel safe while at school. Consequently, no matter how safe our schools actually are, unless the children and adults feel safe in them, those schools can never be effective or nurturing.

Generating Solutions

The publicity about school violence has changed forever the way we view our schools. Fortunately, this change has been characterized by increased public interest in the issues surrounding youth violence and school safety. This interest has led to at least two opportunities to improve our schools and provide support to our children. First, there is an increase in the number of adults who are interested in becoming involved in their local schools and subsequently in the lives of children. Second, there has been an increase in the examination of public policy as it relates to issues of school and youth violence.

Community Activism

A problem that is perceived to be as widespread and epidemic as school violence and school safety issues has

Type of School	Number of School-Associated Deaths
High school	176
Junior high and Middle school	42
Elementary school	26
Alternative schools	12

Table 2. Number of Deaths by Type of School

Reason	Number of Deaths
Interpersonal dispute	72
Unknown	68
Gang related	34
Suicide	27
Hate crime	16
Bully related	12
Accidental	10
Robbery	5
Sexually motivated	3

Table 3. Reasons for School-Related Violent Deaths

the potential to involve all of the adults in a child's community (e.g., immediate and extended family members, school personnel, recreation department personnel, faith community leaders). If the involvement is positive and child focused, it can be an excellent opportunity to decrease acts of violence among children. Research has shown that one way to reduce the incidence of juvenile violence is to foster positive bonds between the child and his or her family, school, and community (Catalano, Arthur, Hawkins, Berglund, & Olson, 1998). This type of bonding to people who hold nonviolent and socially acceptable beliefs and values can be an important tool in our efforts to reduce acts of aggression.

The concern and subsequent involvement of the adults in our communities can provide a productive opportunity for people to think and work strategically to develop comprehensive interventions to create safe, effective, and nurturing schools—schools where students and teachers want to be. The challenge, however, is to make sure everyone has an accurate picture of the situation. This requires a closer examination of the descriptive data as well as the research regarding effective interventions. Since the other chapters in this monograph describe research-based interventions, I will limit this discussion to an examination of the descriptive data.

The National School Safety Center aggregates the data on school-associated violent deaths in a number of ways. One report is aggregated by types of schools in which these deaths occur (see Table 2). Perhaps it is not a surprise to learn that most of the violent deaths occur in high schools. What might be a surprise, however, is that 26 of the total 257 deaths reported since the 1992–1993 school year have occurred in or around elementary schools. This figure alone could be misleading, but closer examination of the data reveals that the vast majority of the people who died on elementary school campuses were adults who confronted their estranged spouses in school parking lots and committed acts of murder/suicide. Deaths that involved children included one suicide, two abductions of children who were on their way to school, and one abduction of a child selling candy and wrapping paper door to door.

This sort of information is important because it points to the types of interventions that will be most effective at each level. For example, elementary school interventions should focus on prevention activities, such as educating adults about the early warning signs of violence and suicide, eliminating unsupervised door-to-door fundraising, and providing supervision to students on their way to and from school.

In addition to looking at *where* deaths take place, it is helpful to understand *why* they happen. The National School Safety Center also aggregates the data by reasons for the violent deaths (see Table 3). This data set reveals that interpersonal disputes were the reason most often given for school-related homicides. It also is interesting to note that about 75% of the known reasons that someone was killed were due to some type of personal or group disagreement (i.e., interpersonal dispute, gang related, hate crime, bully related). This information is helpful for determining the types of prosocial skills (e.g., anger management, conflict resolution, social problem solving) and the types of services and supports (e.g., counseling, diversity appreciation classes) that may be indicated.

The federal government has responded to the recent rash of reports of school violence with an increased interest in fostering the creation of safe, effective, and nurturing schools. The president of the United States directed the secretary of the U.S. Department of Education and the attorney general of the U.S. Department of Justice to develop an early warning guide to help adults reach out to our children more efficiently and effectively. In response to this directive, copies of *Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to*

Safe Schools (Dwyer, Osher, & Warger, 1998) were distributed to every school in the United States in the fall of 1998. This guide describes the characteristics of safe and responsive schools. Safe and effective schools:

- Focus on academic achievement.
- Involve families in meaningful ways.
- Develop links to the community.
- Emphasize positive relationships among students and staff.
- Discuss safety issues openly.
- Treat students with equal respect.
- Create ways for students to share their concerns.
- Help children feel safe expressing their feelings.
- Have in place a system for referring children who are suspected of being abused or neglected.
- Offer extended day programs for children.
- Promote good citizenship and character.
- Identify problems and assess progress toward solutions.
- Support students in making the transition to adult life and the workplace.

In addition to describing safe and responsive schools, the guide also discusses the connection between youth violence and the child, the community, and serious school violence.

A second document, *Safeguarding Youth: An Action Guide for Safe Schools* (Dwyer & Osher, 2000), was released in the spring of 2000. This document, which builds on the research-based practices of the *Early Warning* guide, provides schools with necessary information on implementing a comprehensive violence prevention plan. A third document, scheduled for release in December 2000, will provide schools and communities with a resource kit with, among other things, briefs on research-based violence prevention and reduction interventions.

Changes in Policy

A second area that has been more closely examined as a result of the publicity surrounding school violence is public policy. This situation has provided us the catalyst to examine more closely why we do the things we do and how we could do them better. The federal government has taken a proactive approach to this issue by enacting legislation that promotes prevention and early intervention. Two pieces of legislation that directly relate to this issue are the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the Safe and Drug-free Schools and Communities Act. Each of these is discussed briefly in the following paragraphs.

The major purpose of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, P.L. 105-17), most people will agree, is to ensure that children with disabilities receive a "free, appropriate public education" in the "least restrictive environment." With the 1997 amendments, IDEA was strengthened in a number of ways, including the addition of the goal to ensure that schools are safe and conducive to learning. To accomplish this goal, the IDEA amendments (and their associated regulations) spell out procedures for schools to use to address not only the actual behavior problems, but also the *potential* behavior problems of students with disabilities. This includes proactively implementing a positive behavior intervention plan for students with disabilities who might have behaviors that interfere with learning, as well as the use of functional assessment to help determine the cause of a problem behavior once it has manifested itself.

A second piece of legislation is the 1994 Safe and Drug-free Schools and Communities Act (Title IV of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994, P.L. 103-382). This act basically codifies Goal Seven of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, which states that America's schools should be safe, disciplined, and free of drugs. Essentially, this program grants funds to each state to develop and implement effective and research-based programs at the state and local levels to educate communities about violence and drug use and lead to fewer violent or drug-related incidents in or near schools.

Effective public policy, like effective practice, is based on research and not merely on reactions to public outcry. Policy can have a powerful influence on our lives. Therefore, it is important that policy decisions be based on a solid knowledge not only of the issues surrounding the problem, but also of effective research-based interventions. The challenge comes when changes in policy are implemented that are not backed by empirical data.

One example of a policy that is not supported by the research is so-called zero tolerance. While zero tolerance policies make it very clear what types of behaviors will not be tolerated at school, they are generally punitive and reactive rather than treatment oriented. Unfortunately, for communities that have enacted zero tolerance policies, there is no data to show that they actually are effective in reducing school violence (Skiba & Peterson, 1999).

There are two problems with the concept of zero tolerance. First, it doesn't seem wise to wait until someone has broken a rule before intervening. Waiting until a child has carried a gun to school and perhaps used it to "solve" a disagreement is too late. Interventions that would prevent the child from feeling that he or she needs to carry the gun to school in the first place would be far more effective in reducing violence. Second, ejection without treatment is not an effective method to

deal with these types of problems. Expulsion just moves the problem to a different location and provides children and youth who are experiencing behavior problems with more unsupervised time. For these reasons, it is more prudent for schools and communities to develop more effective and comprehensive approaches to creating safe, effective, and nurturing schools (such as those suggested in the other chapters in this monograph).

Conclusion

To create safe, effective, and nurturing schools we have to look beyond the sensationalized acts of relatively few children. It is crucial that we base our actions on factual knowledge of the situation. And, knowing that a system that is ineffective and inefficient at preventing and reducing violence will merely exacerbate the situation, we also must base our actions on prevention and intervention systems that are backed by research. These systems must give the clear message not only that violence will not be tolerated, but that these problems will be dealt with through proactive interventions by caring adults.

The remaining chapters in this monograph provide solutions that address academic interventions; behavioral interventions on individual, classroom, and school levels; and building effective collaborations. All of these interventions increase the protective factors that keep children from becoming violent and aggressive. They help build those bonds that are so necessary to the healthy development of children, teach the skills necessary for success, and provide a structured and supportive environment that allows our children to use those skills without the threat of violence.

It is our collective responsibility to become involved in an informed way in the endeavor to make all schools safe, effective, nurturing places where all students are free to learn without fear of violence. Schools must once again become places where parents do not fear sending their children—places where children worry more about spelling tests than about losing their lives. That is our mission.

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Curricular and Instructional Recommendations for Creating Safe, Effective, and Nurturing School Environments for *All* Students

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Schools in the 21st century are facing myriad challenges. They are charged with educating a student population that presents a wide range of academic, social, and behavioral needs. Schools are under tremendous pressure to increase the academic performance of all students, and they are in the limelight in the wake of school-based acts of violence perpetrated by students. In spite of these challenges, we have opportunities to reevaluate traditional, often ineffective, practices and implement new, creative practices that are more effective for a wider range of students. Schools do, in fact, have an opportunity to become safer, more effective, and more nurturing for all students, but especially for those for whom school historically has been associated with failure and punishment.

School-wide implementation of effective curricular and instructional practices is a challenging task. Several potential obstacles exist that may make it difficult to accomplish such a goal. For example, such an undertaking will be most effective if all educators in a school are willing participants, which may require *system* change in terms of philosophy, expectations, and practices. This is not to say that it is nonproductive for individual teachers to improve their own teaching; the results are simply more pronounced when change is school wide. Attempts to improve the instructional environments of schools also may require breaking old, ineffective instructional habits. In addition, not all teachers know the strategies that are most likely to produce desired learning outcomes. These obstacles should not put an end to efforts to improve curricular and instructional practices. It is better to identify such obstacles while planning for improvement, because awareness of potential barriers may make it easier to accomplish the end goal.

In the following discussion, I provide a broad overview of curricular and instructional practices that will benefit all students. These are practices that have a strong empirical research base and are user friendly for both teachers and students. Most important, when applied consistently, these practices will improve learning and social outcomes for most students, but particularly those with learning and behavioral problems.

Characteristics of Competent Students Versus Students with Learning and Behavioral Problems

Before considering characteristics of students with learning and behavioral problems, it is instructive to examine characteristics of competent students—those who successfully manage the academic and social demands of school. These students may be characterized as being intrinsically motivated, goal oriented, self-regulated, and socially effective (Ellis & Worthington, 1994). They expect success because they understand what they need to do to achieve that success. They are active participants in the teaching-learning process, using cognitive strategies to facilitate learning. They also have well-developed vocabularies and in-depth knowledge about concepts, both of which make academic learning more manageable. Finally, competent students are socially skilled, with the ability to adjust their behavior to meet the varying demands of changing social situations.

In contrast, students who exhibit chronic learning and behavioral problems characteristically lack these skills. They have little expectation for success and lack internal locus of control related to success. That is, they do not anticipate that their efforts will result in success, and this adversely affects their motivation. These students tend to be passive learners, either not knowing or not using the cognitive strategies used by successful students. For example, they may not attempt to connect new learning to previously learned

concepts, or they may do little to organize new learning for long-term retention (e.g., use mnemonics, review or rewrite notes, make vocabulary cards, use graphic organizers). In addition, these students have weak selective attention skills—they have difficulty focusing on critical aspects of content and minimizing attention to unimportant aspects. They also know fewer words and have less in-depth knowledge about those words (Kameenui & Carnine, 1998)—a trait that affects reading, writing, and content-area knowledge. Finally, these students often lack the social knowledge and skills needed to successfully manage the many social environments of school. As a result, they may receive high levels of negative consequences for inappropriate behavior from both teachers and peers, or they may be socially isolated.

Given this knowledge about characteristics of students who perform poorly in school compared to successful students, we next need to examine what educators can do to improve school-based outcomes for all students, but particularly for those with learning and behavioral problems. Fortunately, research has delineated certain curricular and instructional practices that, when applied with fidelity, are likely to improve academic and social success for these students. The sections that follow describe these practices, with emphasis on strategies that will contribute to safe, effective, and nurturing school environments.

High-Quality Instruction for All Students

A vast body of both descriptive and empirical research has resulted in a "technology of teaching," especially for students with learning and behavioral problems. This section describes instructional practices that have been shown to be positively correlated with increased academic success and improved school behavior. Space precludes a comprehensive discussion of all that is known about effective instruction; however, teachers who incorporate these important basics into their instructional repertoire should elicit positive student responses.

High Levels of Successful Task Engagement

Perhaps the most basic variable related to student achievement is task-engaged time. *Task engagement* refers to the amount of time students are actively engaged in academic responding (e.g., participating in class discussions, working independently, contributing to group work). Task engagement is related to allocated time, or the amount of time that is scheduled for academic instruction. Therefore, one of the first steps in improving academic responding is to make sure your daily schedule includes high levels of time for academic instruction. The majority of the day should be spent in structured instructional activities for both academic and nonacademic (e.g., social skills, physical education) content, with little time for noninstructional activities (e.g., free time). Even so-called reinforcement time can be instructionally oriented (e.g., students playing board, computer, or whole-class games that provide instructional review; grading papers; acting as peer tutor for peers or younger students).

While establishing high levels of engaged time is an important first step in improving academic performance, the quality of student responses during engaged time is equally important. Students should be exhibiting high levels of *correct* responses, rather than incorrect responses. Research has shown that students with learning and behavioral problems often do not experience high levels of correct responding; in fact, one study found that students responded correctly only .014 to .021 times per minute (Van Acker, Grant, & Henry, 1996). Calculating this over a 6-hour school day reveals only 5.04 to 7.56 correct responses per day! It is doubtful that learning can occur with such low rates of correct responses.

Given the importance of correct responses, The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) has established recommended criteria for accuracy in student responses: 80% accuracy during instruction of new material and 90% accuracy during drill and independent practice (i.e., review) (The Council for Exceptional Children, 1987). Gunter and his colleagues (Gunter & Denny, 1998; Gunter, Hummel, & Venn, 1998) have recommended that for optimal learning, students should be responding 4 to 6 times per minute during new learning and 9 to 12 times per minute during review. Using CEC's recommendations for response accuracy, this means a minimum of 3 correct responses per minute during new learning and 8 correct responses per minute during review (Gunter et al., 1998). Anything less than this is unlikely to result in meaningful student learning.

Explicit Instruction

Students who exhibit learning and behavioral difficulties learn best when instruction is teacher led, clear, and direct. A large body of research has delineated specific practices that contribute to explicit instruction (e.g., Ellis & Worthington, 1994). These practices are teacher behaviors that should be a part of every lesson. They include the following:

- State expectations for student learning at the beginning of each lesson.

- Begin each lesson with review of previously learned related material.
- Present new material in small steps, with many examples and student practice at each step.
- Use clear, unambiguous instructional language and vocabulary appropriate to students' levels of understanding.
- Provide high levels of response opportunities throughout the lesson, and give feedback for every student response.
- Provide practice with teacher supervision.
- Provide support to facilitate correct responding until students are fluent in newly learned skills.
- Provide frequent and multiple practice opportunities to facilitate fluency and generalization of skills.

Learning outcomes for students with learning and behavioral problems are maximized when teachers provide clear, direct instruction with high levels of response opportunities to which students respond successfully most of the time. However, effective instruction (i.e., *how* students are taught) is just part of what these students need for success in school. Their needs also dictate that certain elements of curriculum (i.e., *what* they are taught) also must be present. In the next section, I will describe essential curricular components.

Meaningful, Relevant Curriculum

We can delineate essential curricular components by comparing the learning and social characteristics of students who exhibit learning and behavioral difficulties with characteristics of other students who are successful in school. Such a comparison reveals a need for systematic, direct instruction in essential skills that contribute to academic success and social-emotional skills.

Skills for Academic Success

We know that competent students bring a wide range of cognitive skills to the learning environment and that these skills contribute to their academic success. While students with mild disabilities may not develop these skills independently, we can teach them. The following paragraphs describe the types of skills that we should teach.

Skills to Improve Retention of Newly Learned Material. Scruggs and Mastropieri have studied the use of mnemonic strategies to enhance classroom learning (e.g., Mastropieri & Scruggs, 1990; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1990; Scruggs & Mastropieri, in press). Their work reveals that students with learning and behavioral problems benefit from instruction in use of mnemonics to remember vocabulary words, concepts, lists of material, and numbered or ordered information. Mnemonics also appear to help focus students' attention to critical aspects of tasks, and they are fun for students to use, thus enhancing motivation (Scruggs & Mastropieri, in press). Students should be taught how to apply the appropriate mnemonic strategy to remember target material. Development of mnemonic strategies might well be done in peer tutoring pairs or cooperative groups, allowing students to benefit from one another's creativity and brainstorming.

Skills to Improve Use of Cognitive Strategies. Because students with learning problems typically do not employ effective cognitive strategies to enhance learning, they should be taught how to do so. One model for teaching such learning strategies is the Strategies Intervention Model, developed at the University of Kansas Center for Research in Learning. Learning strategies are mnemonics or acrostics that describe step-by-step procedures for a wide range of cognitive, academic, organizational, and study skills, as well as social tasks (Rogan, in press). Each letter of the mnemonic or acrostic cues students to perform a specific action; doing the specified actions should improve performance on the target task. For example, the DRAW strategy (Miller & Mercer, 1993) directs students to perform each step needed to solve word problems in mathematics: D–Discover the sign; R–Read the problem; A–Answer or draw a picture; W–Write the answer. Using learning strategies helps students be more strategic learners and thus will benefit students with learning problems, particularly for basic skills in reading (i.e., decoding and comprehension), math (i.e., computation and problem-solving), and writing (i.e., content and mechanics).

Skills for Self-Regulation. Students with behavioral difficulties characteristically do not develop effective self-regulatory skills on their own. However, they can benefit from instruction in self-control skills, anger-control skills, problem-solving skills, and self-management skills such as self-monitoring and self-reinforcement (e.g., Goldstein, 2000; Webber, Scheuermann, & McCall, 1993). These skills should be directly taught, using the same direct teaching format used for teaching academics. In addition, students should be given multiple practice opportunities, with prompts to use the skills in context, and systematic feedback on their use of skills.

Affective Skills. The characteristic deficits in interpersonal skills in students with behavioral problems speak to their need for instruction in this area. It is par-

ticularly critical to teach young children who exhibit negative peer-related behaviors how to interact in more socially acceptable ways (e.g., Walker, Colvin, & Ramsey, 1995). Teaching prosocial skills must include three components: (1) formal direct instruction in specific interpersonal skills (e.g., accepting negative feedback, joining a group, initiating conversation, giving compliments); (2) reminders and prompts to use the skills in target situations; and (3) clear feedback about students' use of skills—praise for correct use, praise for attempted use, and/or corrective feedback about how to improve performance. Students will need many practice opportunities, both structured (e.g., in the form of role plays, games) and unstructured (e.g., in natural contexts).

Conclusion

Students with learning and behavioral problems characteristically exhibit behaviors that interfere with academic and social success in school. Educators must first acknowledge these challenging behaviors and make a commitment to remediate them through positive, proactive actions, despite considerable potential obstacles. In addition, they should address the instructional climate of the school, increasing the use of instructional strategies that are known to be effective for students with learning and behavioral problems. Finally, educators must ensure that these students have access to systematic, formal instruction in curricula that address specific deficit areas. The outcome of implementing the types of positive academic and nonacademic supports described in this chapter will be schools that are safer, more effective, and more nurturing for *all* students, but particularly for those students for whom schools have traditionally been anything but effective and nurturing.

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Establishing and Promoting Disciplinary Practices at the Building Level That Ensure Safe, Effective, and Nurturing School Environments

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We came together at this forum to explore ways to ensure safer, more effective schools for all students. I would like to describe a school-wide innovation that resulted in the eventual elimination of seclusion time-out and physical restraint in a day school for children and youth with emotional disturbances. Key features of the school-wide innovation included a reinventing of the program's beliefs and assumptions about how we can best intervene and assist students with emotional disturbances; establishing a vision that was grounded on those beliefs and would carry us into the future; assessing the school climate; implementing numerous positive activities as alternatives to punishment; and deploying adequate resources to get the job done. Information we collected during the course of the intervention suggests that the disciplinary practices put into place contributed to a safer, more effective, and nurturing school environment.

Beliefs

According to Webster's dictionary (1993), beliefs are the tenets or body of tenets held by an individual or by a group about truth and reality. Beliefs are powerful motivators of our actions. We often act in certain ways because we believe that our actions will make a difference. The same is true in special education programs; it is the philosophy of the program or its set of core organizational beliefs that dictates the types of practices we employ and the outcomes we will achieve (Grosenick, George, & George, 1990).

As special educators, we need to recognize that our beliefs surrounding the notion of emotional disturbance have a powerful influence on school policy and practice and play a major role in how we behave toward our students. It is our beliefs about students and their capabilities that guide the goals we erect for them, the interventions we devise for them, and our overall perceptions of them as learners and social individuals.

Research has shown that beliefs can also create barriers to student success (Rosenholtz, 1989). Indeed, some of the beliefs we harbor about students with emotional disturbances may condemn them to failure even before we begin working with them. And when students fail, so do we, to some degree.

Some of the potential harmful beliefs in our field include the following:

- Children with emotional or behavioral disorders (E/BD) come from bad homes, and since we cannot change the homes, we cannot succeed with the children in our schools.
- Children with E/BD are incapable of controlling their behavior or regulating their emotions, and it is up to us, the professionals, to control them.
- Most children and youth with E/BD are so aggressive and violent they can be educated only in very restrictive settings.
- The more serious the misbehavior of the children and youths under our care, the more intrusive and severe our methods must be in treating them.
- Seclusion time-out and physical restraint are necessary interventions for the most serious and intractable of these youths.

Few of us enter our chosen field with these beliefs in mind. It is only later, as we interact with others and try to construct meaning for our work (Rosenholtz, 1989), that some professionals come to espouse these types of beliefs. When the methods and techniques that we use on a daily basis fail to produce positive results, some

perhaps come to believe in the irreversibility of E/BD. They give up before the process of education begins.

The question I pose is this: How do our beliefs guide our practices and methods? One example is the use of punishment with children and youths who have emotional or behavioral problems—specifically the use of seclusion time-out and physical restraint in day school programs. The two practices often go hand in hand. The very intrusiveness of the procedures proscribes experimental studies on their effectiveness. Yet these methods continue to be employed because many in the field believe them to be effective a priori. Like other forms of punishment, however, seclusion time-out and physical restraint may have some rather nasty side effects: fear, resentment, anger, resistance, feelings of hate (Axelrod & Apsche, 1983), and even death (Rabasca, 1999).

At Centennial School, a day school for children and youths with emotional disturbances in the eastern region of the United States, there were 1,064 episodes of physical restraint with the 76 students enrolled during the 1997–1998 school year. According to the school's policy manual, "the use of physical restraint was reserved for those situations when a student's behavior was harmful to himself, herself or to others . . . and was never to be administered as punishment" (Centennial School, 1997, p. 31). It is likely that the practices at this school mirror practices in many other special education day schools around the country, although information on the prevalence of physical restraint is admittedly hard to find. Nearly all episodes of physical restraint at Centennial resulted in periods of seclusion time-out, a practice that had been in place for many years.

Vision

Establishing disciplinary practices at the building level that ensure safe, effective, and nurturing school environments begins with a vision of a desired state, something that is preferable to the present state of affairs. We ask ourselves: What is it we hope to achieve? and What is achievable? Answering those questions can sometimes be difficult. Most of us readily know what we *don't* want. For example, we don't want kids to scream and run in the hallways. We don't want kids to use violence to resolve disputes. We don't want them to curse. But what do we want instead, and what would that look like?

Creating a vision of the future forces us to articulate exactly what it is we would like to see occur. If students are not cursing, screaming, and running in the hallways, what will they be doing instead? Shouldn't they be actively engaged in the learning process? Shouldn't they be taught to communicate their feelings of frustration with polite words and make good judgments in social situations? Can they be taught to use an anger management strategy independently and on demand? Can they be guided to accept responsibility for their behaviors? Our vision is tied to our values and what we believe is achievable given the conditions around us (Hunt, 1999). If we believe that students can make positive changes in their lives, we will take the time to teach them to do so. Conversely, if we assume they cannot manage their own behavior, we will control them. Our vision is necessarily grounded in the beliefs we hold and the assumptions we make about the students we serve.

Assessment of the School Climate

A vision of the future begins with a thorough understanding of what is currently in place (Hunt, 1999). At Centennial School, staff were challenged to examine their beliefs about current practices and encouraged to question whether the use of seclusion time-out and physical restraint was making a positive difference in the behavior of students in the program. The assessment involved interviews of key school personnel and students, a review of school policies and procedures, and information collected through direct observation.

Reasons for seclusion time-out and physical restraint, elicited from staff interviews, centered primarily on the severity of the students' misbehaviors as well as a concern for the safety of the student population and faculty. Most interesting were statements of beliefs held by the staff and the powerful influence those beliefs had on practice. For example, while most staff voiced concern about their safety in the absence of physical restraint, the concern was not supported by extant data. An examination of workers' compensation claims from the previous year showed that physical restraint was the leading cause of injuries to school staff. In fact, 82% of all injuries to staff were incurred from episodes of physical restraint. Moreover, there was little evidence that the practices of seclusion time-out and physical restraint were having a positive effect on decreasing violent and dangerous student behavior. In the first 20 days of the following school year, staff had already conducted 112 physical restraints with the 84 students who were in daily attendance, a rate that would have resulted in well over 1,000 physical restraints had it been sustained throughout the remainder of the year. Clearly, the need to employ physical restraint was undiminished by its frequent use. Violent and potentially dangerous student behavior remained at high levels despite the ongoing use of those practices.

In our meetings, we discussed alternative explanations for why students might behave so violently. Could it be that the use of seclusion time-out and physical

restraint were contributing to the high frequency of violent misbehavior? Was the violent misbehavior a function of the methods and techniques we were using or a reflection of the severity of the students we were serving? Perhaps, we hypothesized, students were using aggression because they didn't have meaningful alternative ways of behaving or communicating when they were angry or upset. Perhaps they didn't know and had never been taught how they were supposed to behave in school.

Shared Vision and Teamwork

A vision of a desired state is critical for creating unique school cultures, but it is not sufficient in and of itself (Sergiovanni, 2000). Leadership is important, as is the contribution of others in the workplace. No single person can change a school culture; others must embrace and come to share in the vision for the future (Parker, 1990). Moving away from a reliance on seclusion time-out and physical restraint would require everyone to work together and pull in the same direction. A commitment to a shared vision among staff permits everyone in the workplace to understand clearly not only what the future holds, but also the role each individual is going to play in getting there.

Through an examination of assessment information and an ongoing dialogue, our administrative team was able to establish a goal that would guide us into the future. The goal incorporated our vision of the school culture and stated clearly what we wished to see happen: to make the school a safe place where students and staff want to be. To accomplish this goal, we established three objectives that were similar to those proposed by U.S. Secretary of Education Riley at the First White House Conference on Mental Health (1999): (1) to develop an engaging and stimulating curriculum; (2) to create a safe, civil learning environment; and (3) to include parents as partners in their children's education (see Figure 1). Finally, we established a standard against which to measure our success. We would verify that we were reaching our goal by collecting data that showed a decrease in the episodes of seclusion time-out and physical restraint.

Resources

Having a vision allows for the focused distribution of human, fiscal, and physical resources. Resources are the tools we need to get the job done. When school staff share in a vision and understand the direction for a school program, the job of resource allocation becomes much easier. People are more willing to make sacrifices when they see how their sacrifices contribute to the common good. Deploying adequate resources conveys

Engaging and Stimulating Curriculum

1. Raised academic expectations
2. Scheduled all allocated time with instruction
3. Reworked school schedule using Premack Principle
4. Reduced the number of lesson preparations for teachers each week
5. Introduced daily planning periods for teachers
6. Developed alternative curriculum for low-functioning students
7. Ordered new curriculum materials and supplies

Safe and Civil Learning Environment

8. Improved modeling of appropriate behavior
9. Strengthened the school-wide Token Economy
10. Redesigned point cards
11. Implemented school-wide expectation, rules, and interventions
12. Introduced uniform expectations and procedures for classrooms
13. Established a clear set of consequences for rule-violating behavior
14. Initiated problem-solving procedures to resolve conflicts
15. Introduced daily social skills instruction
16. Developed a staffing procedure for conducting functional assessments and individual interventions
17. Opened a school store
18. Developed a close working relationship with law enforcement officials

Parents as Partners

19. Hosted a parent dinner and open house
20. Developed daily written reports
21. Committed to phoning parents weekly
22. Developed a monthly newsletter
23. Dedicated physical space in the school as a "parent corner."

Figure 1. Innovation Activities by School Objectives.

the message that (a) an innovation is important and (b) staff will be supported in their efforts. It gives them hope. Conversely, poorly deployed or insufficient resources present a major barrier to the success of school-wide interventions (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 1995).

Innovation

At Centennial School, we employed a number of initiatives and sustained them over the course of the school year. There is no single path to school improvement (Sergiovanni, 2000; Skiba & Peterson, 2000). Figure 1 shows the activities we implemented to achieve the three objectives described earlier. We placed emphasis on techniques and interventions that were designed to prevent student behavior from reaching crisis levels. These included teaching prosocial responses through social skills lessons, rewarding appropriate behavior, and taking a school-wide approach to discipline. We also committed to reducing "down time" among students, placing a renewed emphasis on academics, effective instruction, and goal-oriented behavior. School staff were provided with training in a number of areas, including school-wide expectations, positive behavior support, immediate feedback to students, management of low-level misbehavior, and ways to handle crises nonviolently.

Outcomes

Students

There were 327 episodes of physical restraint for the school year in which the school-wide innovation was implemented, with only one instance of physical restraint during the last 40 school days. That represented a 69% decrease in the number of physical restraints from the previous year. The number of minutes of seclusion time-out also decreased, from a high of 15,774 during the first 20 days of the school year to 3,627 during the last 20 days of the school year, a reduction of approximately 77%.

We also collected information on the number of behavioral outbursts—that is, the number of instances secondary students were directed to leave the classroom due to misbehavior during the school year. Like physical restraints and minutes of seclusion time-out, behavioral outbursts decreased steadily throughout the year, from a high of 117 in October to a low of 9 in May. I should note two interesting pieces of information about students during the year of the school-wide innovation. First, 83% of the students who were in attendance during the year of 1,064 restraints (1997–1998) were in attendance during the year of the school-wide innovation (1998–1999); second, overall student attendance rose by 9% during the year that episodes of physical restraint were decreasing.

Safety

Are school staff safer with the removal of the control strategies of physical restraint and seclusion time-out? The answer appears to be yes. An examination of workers' compensation claims showed that the total number of injuries to staff was down slightly (i.e., three fewer than the previous year), but that the proportion of the injuries due to episodes of physical restraint dropped to 55% (as compared to 82% the previous year). Moreover, physical assaults against teachers dropped by 37.5%, or from 16 the previous year to 10 during the year of the school-wide innovation.

Follow-Up

Data collected from September through mid-February of the 1999–2000 school year show there were no episodes of physical restraint and no minutes of seclusion time-out. Only two workers' compensation claims were filed, neither due to a restraint situation, and there was only one physical assault against a teacher during that time period.

Conclusion

We know from the literature that school improvement must be managed. It begins with the notion that something is not working as well as it should be. Optimally, the need for change is affirmed through a thorough evaluation of the entire school program, including the program's philosophy and beliefs—especially those guiding beliefs and assumptions about how to best intervene and assist children (Dwyer, Osher, & Warger, 1998; George, George, & Grosenick, 1990; Grosenick et al., 1990).

We can teach children and youths to manage and control their own behavior, even when they are frustrated and angry (Carr & Durand, 1985; Durand & Carr, 1991; Horner & Carr, 1997). But to do so, we need procedures and methods of intervention that reflect our belief that they can do so. If we show children that it is permissible for us to use aggression when all else fails, then they, too, will use aggression when they exhaust their sometimes rather short list of prosocial behavioral and emotional responses. On the other hand, if we establish expectations and interventions that convey our belief that students can and will exercise and maintain control over their behavior, they will do so.

Today, Centennial School no longer has any seclusion time-out rooms. One is now used for storage of school supplies, and the other has been turned into the

school store, filled with candy, trinkets, notebooks, paper, pencils, pens, nutritious snacks, toy models, and other items that students may earn for good behavior. Placing the school store in a former time-out room is symbolic of how far the school has come in the past 2 years toward establishing and promoting disciplinary practices that ensure a safe, effective, and nurturing school environment.

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Establishing and Promoting Disciplinary Practices at the Classroom and Individual Student Level That Ensure Safe, Effective, and Nurturing Learning Environments

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Educators are keenly aware of the impact children and youths with chronic challenging behavior have on the school environment. Challenging behavior and discipline issues appear as a top concern among both educators and the general public (e.g., Rose & Gallup, 1998). In response to these challenges, educators routinely rely on traditional discipline practices that generally involve secluding or removing students who misbehave (Skiba, Peterson, & Williams, 1997) in spite of the evidence that these techniques do not decrease problem behavior (Mayer, 1995). In the following discussion, I will explore ways to extend the principles of positive behavioral support (PBS) and discuss how key features apply at the classroom management level and in working with individual students who do not respond to school- or classwide instructional strategies.

According to Sugai, Horner, and Sprague (1999), PBS "is a general term that refers to the application of positive behavioral interventions and systems to achieve socially important behavior change" (p. 6). Sugai and colleagues further stated that:

> Positive behavioral support is not a new intervention package, nor a new theory of behavior, but an application of a behaviorally-based systems approach to enhancing the capacity of schools, families, and communities to design effective environments that improve the fit or link between research-validated practices and the environments in which teaching and learning occurs. (p. 6)

Essential to the success of PBS is the consistent application of key practices among all school faculty and staff. The list that follows provides an overview of essential features educators should implement to achieve positive outcomes for all students, especially those children and youths who engage in chronic challenging behavior.

- Decisions regarding school-wide practices are made by a team comprised of representatives of the entire school building, including an administrator.
- Desired student outcomes (i.e., social skills) are clearly defined and stated positively.
- The standards of the social, cultural, and ethnic community in which the school resides are taken into consideration.
- School and community members take ownership of the PBS system.
- An emphasis is placed on teaching prosocial behavior versus simply reducing problem behavior.
- An emphasis is placed on preventing problem behavior.
- Continual monitoring, accommodations, and changes are made through data-based decisions by the team.

In the remainder of this chapter I will provide an overview on implementing key components of PBS at the classroom level and the necessary steps in developing a PBS plan for individual students as mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA 97) for children and youths with disabilities.

Classroom Components of PBS

Students spend the majority of their school day in the classroom. Unfortunately, in most schools, individual teachers are left on their own to establish a classroom management system. Within the context of establishing school-wide systems of PBS, the same team-based problem-solving strategy should be applied at the classroom level. The goal is not to create a school where every classroom looks identical. Rather, the goal is to assist classroom teachers in establishing learning environments that reflect the larger goals of PBS, specifically promoting high rates of academic engaged time and low rates of problem behavior. Three critical areas should be addressed in developing PBS at the classroom level: (1) Educators should be familiar with effective classroom management practices and understand the science behind them; (2) educators should identify key features they deem necessary to educate students successfully; and (3) educators must ascertain whether or not students are able to meet the expectations of the classroom (Lewis & Sugai, 1999).

Best Practices

One of the essential features of PBS is the use of empirically validated practices. As decisions are made in developing classroom management systems, educators are encouraged to adapt and adopt existing practices and strategies. The first level of strategies should include effective instructional practices to prevent problem behavior, such as quick pacing, use of precorrects, and differential feedback (Kameenui & Darch, 1995). The next level of intervention should focus specifically on behavioral strategies to increase academic engaged time. Educators should strive to implement those strategies that have compelling data regarding their effectiveness and contextually fit their classrooms. The following list provides an overview of research-based classroom management strategies (Kerr & Nelson, 1998):

- The optimum management package appears to be a combination of group and individual contingencies.
- Total management packages appear more effective than separate components.
- The most important component of management systems is the application of contingent extrinsic consequences.

Educators should make these strategies a priority over others that may have little or no empirical evidence to support their use.

Identify Key Features of the Classroom

Teachers should carefully consider what features and expectations are necessary to promote success. As a starting point, consider the following four questions (Kameenui & Simmons, 1990, pp. 476–477):

1. What do I want my classroom to look like?
2. How do I want children to treat me as a person?
3. How do I want children to treat one another?
4. How do I want children to remember me when the last day of school ends and I am no longer part of their daily lives?

In answering the first question, the teacher should consider two things: the physical make up of the classroom and the classroom climate. The physical layout of the classroom should contribute to, rather than inhibit, academic engaged time. The classroom climate should be set in the first few weeks of school and maintained throughout the school year. Factors such as including students in establishing expectations and routines should be considered in establishing the classroom climate.

Questions 2 through 4 should also be considered in establishing the overall tone and climate of the classroom. An important consideration to keep in mind is that every social interaction teachers have with students teaches them something. Therefore, it is imperative that we serve as models and consistently display those skills we view as essential to a well-managed, engaged classroom (e.g., respect, responsibility, cooperation, emphasis on being positive). Additional factors that should be kept in mind in establishing classrooms that are in keeping with the principles of PBS include the following list, which reflects those behaviors effective teachers *seldom* display (Johns & Carr, 1995):

- Force a student to do something he or she does not want to do.
- Demand confessions from students.
- Use confrontational techniques.
- Ask students why they act out.
- Punish students.
- Make disapproving comments.
- Compare a student's behavior with other students' behavior.
- Yell at students.
- Engage in verbal battles.
- Make unrealistic threats.
- Ridicule students.

Two Important Considerations

While establishing a classroom management system and identifying key features of the classroom, it is vital to continually ask two questions:

1. Do the students have the prerequisite skills to learn the classroom system?
2. Do the students have the requisite skills to meet the expectations of the classroom?

For example, if I choose to set my classroom up with several small-group discovery learning centers and I want children to laugh and debate as they learn, for my students to benefit from my classroom set-up I need to assess the following prerequisite skills: (a) identify collaborative roles in a small group, (b) problem solve the task, (c) work cooperatively, and (d) problem solve interpersonal disagreements. In addition, I must assess the necessary requisite skills: (a) prior knowledge of the task, (b) the ability to adapt prior knowledge to solve the task at hand, (c) the ability to identify what is specifically asked, (d) the ability to work collaboratively with peers to complete the task, and (e) the ability to problem solve disagreements. If the students are missing any essential skills, it is the teacher's responsibility to teach those skills. Without the minimum skills listed in the previous example, it is unlikely that students will learn and more likely that they will display problem behavior.

Individual Student Components of PBS

The bulk of educator attention is on the individual student who presents chronic challenging behavior. The mandates of IDEA surrounding PBS also are focused on the individual student. However, as numerous studies that employ functional behavioral assessment (FBA) have indicated, knowledge of the context in which behavior occurs is just as essential in understanding why students engage in problem behavior and is a vital element of any intervention (Carr & Durand, 1985; Horner, 1994; O'Neill et al., 1997; Sugai et al., 1999). The remainder of this section outlines essential steps in developing an individual student PBS plan (Sugai et al., 1999). It is imperative that educators view this process as part of the continuum of PBS, starting at the schoolwide level and continuing through the classroom and ultimately the individual student level. In addition, educators should broaden their views of the context, where appropriate, to include home, community, and overall quality of life issues for the student.

Step One: Define the Behavior Operationally

The first step in developing a PBS plan is to operationally define the behavior of concern. The definition should be stated in terms such that, when observing the student, it is easy to recognize when the behavior is occurring to assist in the accurate measurement of the behavior. Avoid vague terms such as *aggressive, socially withdrawn,* and *oppositional.* Instead, list those observable behaviors that lead to the general descriptor (e.g., "hits peers," "is verbally abusive," "spends all of recess by himself," "will not complete worksheets").

Step Two: Conduct a Functional Behavioral Assessment

While the use of FBAs is mandated under IDEA when a change of placement occurs as a result of a disciplinary action, language within the regulations implies that FBAs should be conducted prior to major rule infraction, for example, ". . . if the LEA *did not* conduct a functional behavioral assessment . . ." [IDEA Regulation [300.520(b)(1)(i)]]. Best practice recommends conducting FBAs as part of a comprehensive system-wide plan reflecting the principles of PBS for all students who are displaying challenging behavior for which traditional management techniques have not been successful. At present, there is a solid body of research on the use of specific FBA techniques with children and youths with moderate to severe disabilities who engage in low-frequency/high-intensity behaviors (Blakeslee, Sugai, & Gruba, 1994). The literature base supporting specific FBA techniques with children and youth with mild disabilities is best described as emerging (Fox, Conroy, & Heckaman, 1998; Gable, 1999). Therefore, it is recommended that educators use both indirect techniques such as interviews and rating scales and direct techniques such as A–B–C (antecedent–behavior–consequence), scatter-plots, or other formalized observation systems (see Sugai et al., 1999).

Step Three: Develop a Hypothesis on Why the Student Engages in the Problem Behavior

The purpose of the FBA is to identify predictable events that happen prior to and following the target behavior. At the simplest level, students engage in behaviors to get something they find reinforcing and/or to avoid something they find aversive. By pinpointing events that routinely precede or follow problem behavior, we can make hypotheses about why the behavior occurs. For example, if the problem occurs when the teacher makes certain requests or gives certain tasks, the problem behavior may be functioning to remove or avoid

the requests or tasks. If, following the problem behavior, the teacher or others in the environment attend to the student, even if the attention is negative (e.g., reprimands, reminders, corrections), the student may be engaging in the behavior to get that attention. By using several indirect and direct FBA methods, the task becomes one of looking for predictable patterns from the learning environment with respect to the student's behavior.

Step Four: Target a Replacement Behavior

The next task is to ask, "What do we want the student to do instead?" Two factors should be kept in mind in identifying a replacement behavior (i.e., prosocial skill). First, we do not simply add "don't" or "stop" to the problem behavior; rather, we must target an appropriate social skill for the problem context. Second, the replacement behavior *must* result in the same or a similar outcome as the problem behavior. If we expect students to use the social skills we teach, the skills must meet their needs. For example, if the FBA reveals that the student engages in problem behavior to avoid doing independent tasks (an aversive to the student), the replacement behavior must also remove or lessen the aversive (e.g., ask for help, work with a partner, earn breaks during the task, break the task down into smaller assignments).

Step Five: Teach the Replacement Behavior

While students may already have the replacement skill in their repertoire, it is still important to spend time teaching and practicing the skill. Skills should be taught one on one or in small groups using effective social skill instructional strategies and throughout the school day (Sugai & Lewis, 1996).

Step Six: Modify the Environment

The final step is perhaps the most difficult and yet vital to success. The problem behavior should no longer result in the previous outcome (i.e., get or avoid). Only the targeted replacement behavior should access what the student wants. The goal is to teach the child that he or she can get his or her needs met by using appropriate social skills. If the environment allows the student to get his or her needs met by using the problem behavior, that is what the child will most likely use. A consistent school-wide system of PBS will facilitate both the initial behavior change and maintenance and generalization. The primary focus at this step should be on changing adult behavior and the way in which instruction is delivered to provide a consistent and predictable environment in which the student's new replacement behavior accesses the outcome the problem behavior served (i.e., get/avoid).

Conclusion

The essential features of positive behavioral support stress prevention, instruction, and an emphasis on building systems to support prosocial replacements for problem behavior that result in socially important outcomes for children and youth. These same principles should be applied across school systems: (a) school wide, (b) at the classroom level, and (c) at the individual student level. Critical practices to maximize success include the following:

- Focus on what you want students to do instead of the problem behavior.
- Do not assume that students have the skills or opportunities to practice critical social skills outside of the school context.
- Teach and practice critical skills throughout the school year.
- Implement PBS strategies consistently across school systems.

It is important that educators not abandon a PBS system if it is not having an immediate desired impact. Rather, keep in mind that the PBS process is a dynamic problem-solving approach (Sugai et al., 1999). Assemble the team, review what has been tried to date, examine the data to inform decisions, and reapply the problem-solving process. An additional consideration that should be kept in mind is that it will take time to impact all school systems. It is important that school teams build in strategies to maintain and renew their efforts, especially when addressing individual students who display chronic patterns of problem behavior.

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Establishing School Environments That Ensure Positive Professional Relationships

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Collaboration—with colleagues, family members, and the community—has been widely acknowledged as critical for meeting the diverse needs of students with emotional, behavioral, and academic difficulties (Bullock & Gable, 1997; Cramer, 1998; Fishbaugh, 1997; Pounder, 1999; Walther-Thomas, Korinek, McLaughlin, & Williams, 2000). Yet collaborative relationships in schools are often difficult to develop and even more challenging to maintain. Lack of time, limited preparation for collaborative roles, competing priorities and perspectives, and limited resources make collaboration a force that requires effort and commitment (Friend & Cook, 1996; Walther-Thomas, Korinek, & McLaughlin, 1999). So how do we ensure positive professional relationships that will ultimately benefit the students and families we serve? In this discussion, I examine characteristics of school cultures that foster collaboration, structures for collaborative endeavors, barriers to successful collaboration, and strategies for overcoming them to promote positive working relationships on behalf of students with challenging behaviors.

Characteristics of School Cultures That Foster Collaboration

Friend and Cook (1996) referred to collaboration as a style of interaction that characterizes many types of group processes. Idol, West, and Lloyd (1988) defined collaboration as an interactive process whereby individuals with diverse expertise work together to plan and problem solve. Whether professionals regard collaboration as a style or a process, its ultimate purpose is to assist educators in serving students more effectively. Collaboration introduces new perspectives, ideas, and expertise to enhance individual practice.

Certain characteristics typify school cultures that promote effective collaboration (Friend & Cook, 1996; Gable, Korinek, & McLaughlin, 2000; Walther-Thomas et al., 2000). These features include common values and understandings, shared resources and responsibility, and administrative support. Collaboration is most productive in settings where teamwork is valued among staff and students, personnel respect one another's expertise and contributions, and participants are convinced that teamwork produces better results than individuals working in isolation. There are trust, openness, and parity among team members as they strive to meet the needs of students. Responsibility for all students is shared, along with decision making, resources, and accountability. Collaborators also share and can articulate a vision of what they want their program to be like. This vision informs their daily actions and decisions. Team members are working toward common goals; have a clear sense of purpose; and understand that building productive relationships takes time, sustained commitment, effort, and skill. Structures or forums for collaborative planning and problem solving exist, and collaboration is actively supported and promoted by administrators.

Collaborative Structures

A number of formal and informal options for collaboration exist in schools. Most settings have at least some of these structures or features of them in place. Others can be considered additional alternatives to expand the network of support available to professionals to help them improve student performance. Walther-Thomas and her colleagues (1999) categorized these various types of collaborative support as frontline support, special needs support, special education support, and interagency support.

Frontline Support

Frontline support is proactive and preventive, providing educators with the means to deal with challenges

before they become more serious. Frontline supports are options routinely available to educators in their day-to-day work and include relationships with families (Corrigan & Bishop, 1997; Epstein, 1995); departmental or grade-level teams (Dickinson & Erb, 1996); peer coaches or mentors (Joyce & Showers, 1995; Stedman & Stroot, 1998); school improvement teams; and support from administrators, supervisors, or other school leaders (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996; Pounder, 1999). These arrangements also give special educators forums for closer working relationships with general educators and other school personnel to pave the way for greater integration of students with challenging behaviors. Frontline support relationships enable professionals to share ideas, develop solutions to common concerns, deal with issues, and stay abreast of developments in the school and field to make professional practice more effective.

Special Needs Support

Special needs structures provide additional assistance to deal with more specific behavioral or academic concerns (Gable et al., 2000). Educators might request special support from assistance teams (Chalfant & Pysh, 1989; Whitten & Dieker, 1995), consultants (Friend & Cook, 1996; Gable et al., 1998; Idol, Nevin, & Paolucci-Whitcomb, 1994), cooperative teachers (Bauwens & Hourcade; 1995), or paraeducators (Pickett & Gerlach, 1997) to help them problem solve and develop action plans to address specific concerns. For example, a team might devise ways to differentiate instruction for a particular student with emotional or behavioral disorders (E/BD) in a certain subject or to provide extra reinforcement to a student who has experienced personal trauma.

Special Education Support

Special education comes into consideration when a student is suspected of or has been identified as having an emotional, behavioral, academic, sensory, or other disability that requires special education. Child study or resource teams can offer assistance to teachers who are dealing with more serious and persistent learning and behavioral concerns prior to students' being identified as having disabilities. If a student's performance does not improve after reasonable modifications, the team might recommend a full multidisciplinary evaluation to assess the student's strengths and needs and to determine whether or not the student has a disability. When a student is found eligible for special education services, an individualized education program (IEP) is developed by a team that includes the special educator, general education teacher, relevant specialists, parent or family member(s), and the school or agency representative. The IEP team also is involved in functional assessments and behavioral intervention planning when the student demonstrates significant behavioral challenges.

Interagency Support

To serve many students with emotional or behavioral challenges, school personnel might collaborate with professionals from other agencies such as social services, mental health, juvenile justice, and rehabilitation to address more complex student and family needs (Haley, VanDerwerker, & Power-deFur, 1997). Educational partnerships may also be developed with businesses, churches, civic organizations, universities, or federal agencies to extend services beyond those offered by the school alone. Interagency teams work to develop and deliver an array of school- and community-based services tailored to meet the needs of students with significant emotional or behavioral challenges.

Although not all of these collaborative structures are likely to be available in any one school, every setting should offer a variety of support options to help professionals address students' academic, behavioral, and emotional needs. Choices of structures may depend on variables such as the complexity and severity of student needs, the demands of the curriculum and setting, and the preferences and expertise of the teachers and specialists working with the students (Walther-Thomas et al., 2000).

The first step toward increasing and improving the options for collaboration in a particular setting is to identify the support structures that currently exist and to consider the effectiveness of those structures. Building upon the strengths of effective teams to expand support options in areas of need will help to ensure the success of collaborative efforts. Next, unmet needs or gaps in services should be identified, along with structures for collaboration that are most likely to meet those needs. Seeking out interested and willing volunteers to try new forms of collaboration will gradually extend the support options available to professionals and students in school settings. Sharing information and other resources and providing regular opportunities for input and feedback from those affected by the collaborative efforts are also important to developing more effective programs and services.

Barriers to Positive Professional Relationships and Strategies for Overcoming Obstacles

While many of the teaming arrangements described in the previous section may exist in a given setting, the professionals who participate on these teams often do

not perceive them to be as effective as they could be. In other cases, structures are limited and collaboration among colleagues is the exception rather than the norm. To improve both the quality and choices for teamwork, planners must identify and systematically address obstacles to collaboration in their respective settings. Frequently cited barriers to more positive and productive professional relationships include lack of administrative support, resistance from potential partners, lack of preparation or professional development, and lack of resources (e.g., time, personnel) for implementing effective collaboration. In this section, specific strategies are offered for overcoming common barriers to collaboration and for establishing more productive working relationships.

Administrative Support

In settings where collaboration is prevalent and productive, school leaders actively set this expectation for their programs. They articulate the vision of collaboration enthusiastically and often to staff, students, and family members to motivate and mobilize participants in working toward common goals. They provide and participate in professional development opportunities designed to develop the instructional and collaborative expertise needed to make team efforts successful. Moreover, effective administrators recognize the importance of sharing leadership with capable and respected members of the school community, including teachers, specialists, and family members. Shared leadership provides a broader base of support for collaborative initiatives and helps to establish a culture of collaboration. It also ensures that collaborative efforts will continue when personnel changes or new initiatives are introduced (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996; Pounder, 1999).

Effective leaders also support collaboration by securing the resources needed to implement teamwork, including time, personnel, scheduling, and materials. Often this involves realigning or redistributing existing resources; securing additional resources through grants, partnerships with businesses, universities, or other agencies; and creatively working with staff to redesign programs to meet student needs. Hand scheduling students and staff to provide planning time and promote collaboration, recruiting volunteers, hiring floating substitutes, recognizing and compensating staff for personal time spent on collaboration, and scheduling early release periods are other ways that administrators show support.

In settings where administrative support is perceived to be limited, school personnel can cultivate more support by sharing their ideas and successes with students, programs, and projects with their school leaders. Teachers and specialists can help to recruit volunteers for collaborative initiatives and pilot projects such as cotaught units or peer tutoring projects. Proponents of teaming can become active in policy-making groups for the school and the district to provide input into key decision making and resource allocation to support greater collaboration. Staff can also plan and problem solve with administrators to identify short- and longer-term solutions to issues such as planning time, scheduling, and caseloads.

Resistance to Change

Friend and Cook (1996) advised professionals to expect, respect, and address resistance when educational changes are introduced. Collaboration represents a change in the way schools traditionally have worked. Resistance is a natural reaction to change for a variety of reasons. In some cases, the purposes of the change are unclear. For example, general educators may wonder why they should work with special educators to serve students with behavioral challenges when these students traditionally have been the responsibility of specialists in more self-contained settings. They genuinely cannot see the benefits of less restrictive programs for either general or special education students. Poor communication, lack of participation in the planning phases of innovations, or lack of trust in the change initiators may also cause resistance. Many educators feel unprepared for new roles and fear that they will not fulfill these roles effectively. For others, the present situation may seem satisfactory or the cost of collaboration in time and energy may seem too great (Friend & Cook, 1996; Gable et al., 2000; Pounder, 1999).

To deal effectively with resistance, it is important to consider the reasons why potential partners may be reluctant and to respond in a way that is personalized and helpful. For example, objections related to lack of preparation may be reduced through staff development or mentoring. Having respected colleagues pilot collaborative initiatives may bring others who were initially resistant on board when they see the possibilities. Often, listening to the reservations that colleagues express about teaming relationships gives change agents important clues about needed adjustments in their approaches and programs. For example, participants may express concerns because the purpose of a team or the roles of team members were never clarified. Resistance may have been a reasonable response that prompted initiators to articulate objectives and procedures more clearly.

Professional Development

Many school professionals have had little preparation for collaborative roles and responsibilities. Others now serving students with behavioral challenges or who

might serve them in less restrictive settings may have limited knowledge and skills in critical areas of curriculum, instruction, and behavioral support. In addition, different staff members are typically at different stages of readiness and commitment to collaboration. Without adequate attitude and skill development, many teams are likely to have difficulty in their working relationships and fail to realize the potential benefits of collaboration (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996; Walther-Thomas et al., 1999, 2000).

An array of professional development options is recommended to allow participants to choose activities that best meet their individual needs. Formats that may be considered in addition to more traditional workshops and coursework include study groups, case study reviews, video reviews, visiting model programs, attending conferences, working with experienced mentors, and using resources available on the Internet. Potential topics for professional development may include characteristics of students with challenging behaviors, the special education process, positive behavior support and crisis intervention techniques, learning strategies and social skills development, and techniques to ensure access to the general education curriculum. Joint participation in staff development efforts provides team members with opportunities to learn, plan, and practice together. Team training also affords a support system for implementation that is typically more effective than individual training and implementation.

Communication and teaming skills are also critical to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of collaboration (Friend & Cook, 1996; Gable et al., 2000). Individual competence with behaviors such as attending, paraphrasing, reflecting content and feelings, questioning, summarizing, and checking for accuracy are essential in collaborative interactions. Team processes, including problem solving, reaching consensus, negotiation, and conflict resolution, are also important. Team interactions should be characterized by openness and respect for diverse perspectives, but also honesty and support. Members should participate actively; stay on task; keep communications clear and jargon free; and follow an efficient process for problem identification, brainstorming, intervention planning, progress monitoring, and task accomplishment. These individual and team behaviors require preparation and practice. Collaborators should assess their functioning and efficacy regularly to identify and build on strengths and to set specific targets for more effective communication and teamwork. Data from measures of student academic and behavioral outcomes, consumer satisfaction, and team member satisfaction can be used to help teams evaluate and improve their collaborative efforts over time.

Resources for Collaboration

Limited resources frequently are identified as another barrier to successful collaboration. Resources most often in demand include time, personnel, and reasonable schedules and caseloads that allow professionals to work together to meet student needs (Friend & Cook, 1996; Walther-Thomas et al., 2000). Seldom will collaborators have all the resources they desire to support their efforts on behalf of students with challenging behaviors, but adequate support for collaborative initiatives is necessary to ensure success. In successful programs, existing resources often have been realigned or redistributed to support greater teamwork. For example, staff schedules can be coordinated more closely to allow coteachers to share the same planning period. In addition to using existing resources in different ways, new resources may be secured through local, state, federal, or private agency grants related to school achievement, safe schools, violence prevention, or other initiatives. Partnerships with local businesses, universities, community agencies, and other schools also may increase or efficiently leverage needed resources. Lending libraries and resource and technical assistance centers are additional sources of materials, expertise, and professional development.

Schools and programs have devised a number of creative ways to garner the time needed for collaborative planning and problem solving. Volunteers from parent-teacher organizations, colleges, community service agencies, and retirement communities may be recruited to supervise students during appropriate times to allow professionals to collaborate. Use of floating substitutes, administrators, or specialists to cover classes; blocking "specials" such as music, art, and physical education; doubling up classes for special activities; compensating faculty for personal time spent launching collaborative initiatives; and early release days are other alternatives that have been used to provide time for collaboration. Technology also offers interesting possibilities for enhancing collaborative efforts through the use of e-mail, voice mail, and electronic conferencing. If collaboration is to realize its potential for supporting students with challenging behaviors, time for communication and interaction must be provided as a regular part of the schedule.

Conclusion

Today, collaboration is widely considered a key element in successfully meeting the diverse and complex needs of students with academic and behavioral challenges. This chapter has addressed the characteristics of and structures for effective collaboration in school settings. Common barriers to productive teaming were identi-

fied, along with suggestions for overcoming these obstacles. Individuals and planning teams can take specific steps toward making their own interactions with colleagues and their school cultures more positive and productive. These efforts are most likely to succeed when they are thoughtfully planned, systematically implemented, and conscientiously evaluated and improved over time. The ultimate measure of the success of collaboration is better programs, services, and outcomes for the students we serve.

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Positive Academic and Behavioral Supports: Perspectives from Practitioners

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It was a diverse group of approximately 20 individuals who came together in this discussion group to respond to the remarks of the keynote speakers at the CCBD Forum on Positive Academic and Behavioral Supports. Present were special education teachers, general education teachers, school administrators, counselors, university professors, and university students. Common to all members of the group was a commitment to provide safe and effective educational opportunities to all students.

A Mandate for Safe and Effective Schools

Concerns over the academic achievement of America's youth and the potential of an unfavorable position in global competition have triggered an intense scrutiny of educational practices. One result has been numerous national reports on the state of public education and the need for national goals and accountability (e.g., "National Education Goals," "America's Choice," "America 2000"). Such calls for educational reform and increased accountability have provided the impetus for state legislatures to establish procedures to meet high academic standards and assess the level of student achievement. Such initiatives have been spawned across the nation and have become the vehicles of educational reform (e.g., the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills [TAAS], Kentucky Instructional Results Information System [KIRIS], California's Protocol).

Similarly, concern over safety in public schools has increased. During the mid-1990s, 3 million acts of violence and theft took place in public schools each year (i.e., approximately 16,000 incidents a day), over 100,000 weapons were brought to school daily, and more than 40 students were wounded or killed (Walker, Colvin, & Ramsey, 1995). In 1997, about one in five high school students regularly carried a firearm, knife, razor, club, or other weapon to school (General Accounting Office, 1997). These troubling reports (along with media sensationalism) have fostered a climate of so-called zero tolerance toward violent or disruptive behaviors (Elam, Rose, & Gallup, 1996). The American public favors the removal of "troublemakers," endorses the use of security guards and trained dogs to detect drugs, and supports random drug testing of students (Elam et al., 1996).

Violence in the schools is of major concern to both educators and the public. Of equal concern is what is viewed as overzealous reporting by individuals in the media. Words such as *exaggerated* and *overkill* were used by discussion group participants to convey a belief that fear is generated as the result of 24-hour news coverage (e.g., the Littleton, Colorado, massacre). Such publicity may actually glorify the misdeeds in the eyes of violence-prone children or adolescents. For example, on March 13, 2000, CBS profiled the "baddest" kid in Alabama in its weekly newsmagazine *60 Minutes* (http://cbsnews.cbs.com/now/section/0,1636,3415-412,00.shtml). This report reflected typical and negative views of troubled youths and referred specifically to problems associated with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and students with emotional or behavioral disorders (E/BD).

While negative publicity about schools is pervasive, very little attention is given to positive events taking place within public schools in the United States. The discussion group expressed concern with the misrepresentation of statistics, which occasionally are reported without an examination of the specific circumstances. For example, some incidents that have been character-

ized as indicative of violence in schools actually have been domestic disputes occurring on school premises (e.g., the parking lot) having nothing to do with the school itself. As a result of inadequate or misleading coverage, participants agreed that it is necessary for educators to ensure that success stories are included in the news and that journalists filter out misleading statistics before reporting.

In reaction to fear generated by exaggerated news accounts, policymakers have passed measures such as zero tolerance policies. Participants remarked that these policies must be tempered with common sense. In a recent incident, a student was expelled for carrying a knife, despite the fact that he was holding the knife to prevent another student from committing suicide. Participants felt that perhaps the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders (CCBD) should intensify efforts to educate the public as to the need for positive behavioral support (PBS), either in lieu of reactive policies or in addition to them. In fact, zero tolerance policies without PBS may be counterproductive. Participants also noted that it is necessary for schools to expand collaborative efforts with community agencies, the juvenile justice system, and health care workers. Finally, the need for continued services after expulsion (for all students) and the maintenance of current practices such as alternative education were raised as particularly important issues to address. It was noted that crime rates consistently increase during after-school hours.

Participants acknowledged that success stories do exist in both academics and prosocial behavior. In numerous classrooms, well-trained and dedicated teachers employ relevant teaching practices that focus on material that is important and enjoyable to students. For instance, it was reported that a teaching strategy utilizing the format of the popular television program *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* was successful in elementary mathematics instruction. Research-validated instructional approaches such as learning strategies are particularly motivating to all students, including those without disabilities. Finally, effective teachers take their cues from students and seek their input when looking for reinforcers and/or motivators.

Also necessary to sound educational practice is positive and enthusiastic support from administrators. Successful schools have caring and effective principals who are involved in their day-to-day operations and are aware of the teaching practices of their faculty.

Disciplinary and Instructional Practices That Ensure Safe and Effective Schools

To ensure that school environments are safe and conducive to learning, school-based preventative measures should be established. According to Gottfredson (1997), effective school-based strategies include programs that clarify and communicate expectations about behaviors (e.g., rules and consistent enforcement), focus on comprehensive instructional programs that emphasize social competency skills, foster supportive interactions and greater flexibility during instruction, and emphasize problem-solving skills for youths who may be at risk of academic failure and violence.

Smith and Rivera (1995) suggested a continuum of interventions that can be implemented in both general education and special education classrooms. Effective implementation of interventions requires linking the problem behavior with the technique that is deemed least intrusive, yet most effective. Examples of these interventions, ranging from less to more intrusive, include prevention techniques (e.g., rules, arranging the physical environment, planning for transitions), specific praise, ignoring, criterion-specific rewards, group contingencies, peer-mediated strategies, self-management, overcorrection, and exclusion. According to Lewis and Sugai (1999), prevention measures for improved classroom management may include skills in using advance organizers/precorrections, keeping students engaged, providing a positive focus, consistently enforcing school and class rules, and correcting rule violations and social behavioral errors proactively.

For students with disabilities, school personnel must be proactive in addressing problem behaviors through the individualized education program (IEP) process and base behavior plans on functional assessment. Functional behavioral assessment (FBA) involves analyzing contextual factors related to the occurrence of a challenging behavior in order to draw conclusions about the purpose, or intent, it serves for a student (Horner, 1994). Determining the intent of the behavior helps teachers identify contextual modifications that may reduce the occurrence of inappropriate behaviors and teach the student appropriate replacement behaviors (Katsiyannis & Maag, 1998). Although FBA can be labor intensive, it is the best methodology for managing inappropriate behaviors and increasing prosocial ones.

School-wide, classroom-wide, and individually based disciplinary procedures are encouraged as a means to reduce office referrals and the use of reactive, punitive measures such as exclusion, physical restraint, and even the level of medications administered. *Positive behavioral support* is a general term that involves the implementation of strategies and systems to achieve socially acceptable behaviors. These interventions address the context in which the behavior occurs and the functionality of the behavior and are justified by outcomes that are acceptable to all interested parties—student, family, and community. PBS emphasizes teaching as a central behavioral tool, as well as the use of data collection and analysis (Lewis & Sugai, 1999).

George's description of the positive changes taking place in his school (this volume) prompted several questions from participants: Do effective interventions and academic strategies eliminate the need for physical restraint in students with E/BD? What does one do when faced with a student who has "lost control"—thus placing himself or herself and/or others at risk of injury—if one avoids restraint techniques? Participants commented that two of the commercially available restraint systems, namely the training offered by the Crisis Prevention Institute (1999) and the techniques taught through the Mandt System (David Mandt & Associates, 1997), provide methods by which to deescalate tension and avert crises verbally. Both companies endorse the use of physical restraint only as a last resort and warn that it should never be used as a form of punishment, and certainly not as a behavior management tool.

In lieu of physical restraint, the following suggestions may protect school personnel (and/or students) from harm: (a) Avoid power struggles; (b) step out of the way rather than confront violent individuals; (c) provide an opportunity for students to walk away and thereby "cool off"; (d) provide an appropriate amount of adult supervision; and (e) avoid becoming a "provocateur" by engaging in inadequate teaching behaviors. The use of FBA is an effective way to identify antecedents that trigger violent episodes and reinforcers that maintain aggressive behavior. Incorporating this information into behavior intervention plans will provide the framework with which to teach students to respond in appropriate ways.

Positive reinforcement is also important to the maintenance of prosocial behavior. Reference was made to research indicating that six negative remarks for each positive remark are common in classrooms across the nation. Anecdotal information also pointed to an instance in which observation of a first-grade classroom revealed that the teacher provided no positive reinforcement to students.

Given the fact that a small percentage of students account for the majority of disciplinary referrals, there is a need for specialized individual interventions. In these situations, a behavioral support plan based on information from functional assessment data needs to be developed. Ongoing communication with parents regarding a student's progress is essential. One school sends a daily checklist home with a first-grade student, incorporating the comments of all school personnel with whom the child interacts. This serves as an effective ongoing intervention.

In addition to individualized efforts, school-wide prevention is viewed as important. The example was given of one school that has established a positive behavioral support team. Team members have posted buzzing bees as reminders to students to "be respectful," "be responsible," "be good citizens," and so forth. The team awards "bee bucks" to reinforce prosocial behavior. Similarly, another school awards keyrings with plastic medallions to students who are "caught being kind." Students proudly display their rings and medallions on their school backpacks, their names are broadcast during morning announcements, and they are cited in local publicity.

What factors combine to create success? As mentioned before, school-wide efforts require the enthusiastic involvement and commitment of the school's administrative team. Also enhancing effectiveness is community involvement. Several representative schools participate in the "Character Counts!" initiative (Josephson, 2000). In those areas, local businesses post the names of successful students on their marquees. One group participant cited research indicating that this program is most successful when the entire community is involved in the effort.

School–Community Partnerships to Ensure Safe and Effective Schools

A supportive classroom environment is essential not just for students with disabilities, but for all students. Korinek, Walther-Thomas, McLaughlin, and Williams (1999) have identified a variety of techniques to facilitate the establishment of such supportive environments. These techniques are grouped under school-wide supports (e.g., positive discipline, disability awareness), academic and social supports (e.g., cooperative learning groups), peer supports (e.g., peer mediators), and community-school supports (e.g., adult volunteers; business partnerships; organized activities such as recreation, scouting groups).

Collaboration Within Schools

When group members were asked to reflect on collaborative efforts occurring within their own schools, a sense of reality emerged. Barriers that traditionally have been erected between agencies continue to impede assistance to students, and some educators continue to resist collaborative attempts within schools.

Inadequate Training

Teachers often lack the skills necessary for effective coteaching because universities place insufficient emphasis on collaboration in undergraduate teacher education. Teamwork must be taught; if teacher training is insufficient, then staff development should be geared to correcting the deficiency.

Despite staff development activities that endorse collaboration, rapid change may breed resentment. A school that is moving toward an inclusive model of

service delivery to students with disabilities may find it beneficial to integrate students gradually. Teachers should be "hand picked" in the beginning, with those who are willing selected for initial efforts. The remainder of the school may then be brought into the inclusive system as the system's effectiveness is demonstrated. General educators, the participants observed, should not be blamed for their hesitancy to accept students with disabilities into their classrooms. Most have not been trained to work with these students, and many have had no classes in behavior management as undergraduates. It was apparent from the group's discussion that coteaching, although desirable, continues to present obstacles to students and teachers.

Ultimately, the responsibility for collaboration lies, at least in part, with special educators. Group participants were encouraged to communicate with coworkers regarding individual student needs. When doing so, teachers might actually capitalize on the recently publicized violent episodes in our public schools that have provided an opportune climate for the "selling" of FBA and PBS.

Emphasis on state-wide accountability standards and the ranking of schools based on test scores are contrary to the spirit of IDEA and its mandate for FBA and PBS. In many instances, state policies reward schools for high scores on standardized tests by giving them additional funds. In contrast, current policies reducing the funds given to low-performing schools are illogical, and they place undeserved pressures on teachers and students with disabilities. It follows that there is a need to educate the public, the media, and particularly policymakers as to the disadvantages of such tests in light of individual student needs.

Collaboration Between Agencies

The work of the Norfolk Interagency Consortium (Pratt, 2000) illustrates the worth of focused efforts at interagency collaboration. However, in seeking interagency collaborative solutions, obstacles must be bridged. Cutbacks in funding were described as detrimental to collaboration, as was the presence of "a lot of hoops to jump through." Assembling agency personnel is a challenging task. Once they are seated at the table, emphasis should be on a coordinated problem-solving effort among agency representatives.

As the Norfolk experience illustrates, cooperation is possible. Participants felt that such initiatives must be emulated in other communities and expressed the hope that recently funded collaborative initiatives will foster improvement. Evidence of this has already been forthcoming, as is the case in Pennsylvania with its statewide initiative, "Family Centers" (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 1998).

Conclusion

Participants agreed that all of us are integral to finding solutions and that we must work together to meet the needs of children and youth. Longstanding obstacles to meaningful reform must be dismantled. Changes must take place in both disciplinary policies and practices. Emergent best practices must replace flawed and ineffective solutions to the challenges facing school personnel in the 21st century. Only then will we be able to offer positive academic and behavioral supports to all students.

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Promoting Positive Academic and Behavioral Supports Across Settings: Renewing the Challenge to Ourselves and Others

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Across the country, schools face the formidable task of educating students within safe and nurturing learning environments. We know that when schools, families, communities, and social service agencies work collaboratively, students will benefit. This means working collaboratively to identify and improve those positive academic and behavioral supports that help create safe, effective, and nurturing schools not just for students with emotional or behavioral disorders (E/BD), but for all students. What follows are the most significant aspects of a discussion among parents, teachers, principals, teacher educators, psychologists, special education supervisors, and behavior intervention consultants who participated in a working forum sponsored by the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders (CCBD). The forum addressed several overarching imperatives, including safe and effective schools and positive academic and behavioral supports.

A Mandate for Safe and Effective Schools

A complex mix of legislative and policy issues contributes to the growing list of demands on professionals who serve students with E/BD. In response to these issues, there is mounting recognition of the need to create an infrastructure that promotes those practices that not only change the culture of the school, but also influence educational policy. Accordingly, professionals need strategies that promote positive academic and behavioral supports they can implement across the curriculum with simplicity and fidelity (Quinn, this volume). Unfortunately, the operation of many public school systems is antithetical to creating safe and nurturing environments that are conducive to successful learning outcomes for all students.

The discussion group singled out the following issues as major factors in the growing demands and challenges that face education personnel today:

- Changes in federal legislation that challenge public schools in terms of understanding what the regulations demand and how to put those policies into practice. Professional collaboration is no longer a recommendation; it is a requirement.
- The media depiction of youth violence, which stands in stark contrast to actual data showing that violence is declining in our schools (Quinn, this vol-

ume). The media portrayal of steadily increasing violence in our schools is leading many to believe that harsh and punitive measures must be taken to stem the epidemic (Quinn, this volume).

- The growing popularity of so-called zero tolerance policies. Many of us are concerned that these policies will make our schools more rigid and eliminate the practice of dealing with each case on an individual basis. This does not mean that we endorse having students who are violent in our schools, it simply means that we do not advocate surrendering our ability to deal with each student individually based on the circumstances involved. The most current thinking about zero tolerance fails to recognize the primary cause for unacceptable behavior in our schools, namely, lack of student academic success (Nelson, Scott, & Polsgrove, 1999). Too few practices address both academics and behavior. As a group, we were also concerned that the further students are placed from the regular school, the harder it is for them to get back to it.

We discussed a number of critical issues related to student behavior that impedes the teaching/learning process. Of primary concern was how to deal with impeding behaviors, the assumption being that once those behaviors are addressed, there will be an increase in student academic performance. Unfortunately, the impeding structure of public education, our political climate, overemphasis on punitive measures, time constraints, training and resource constraints, and personal agendas impose significant limitations on our effectiveness in addressing student behavior. The structure of public education is not always conducive to supporting positive academic and behavioral support for all students, as evidenced in the following list of points raised by participants:

- A major challenge is how to convince some teachers, administrators, and politicians that we need to do more for all of our students when the current political climate says we are already doing too much.
- We continue to impose punitive and negative consequences when we know that these measures do not work in creating positive academic and behavioral supports for students.
- Teachers, especially in general education classes, feel overwhelmed by students with E/BD who are being assigned to their classes as a result of inclusion policies: most of those teachers have not had adequate training to understand how to motivate and teach these students.
- Smaller schools may not have the resources or support to help these students and need to be shown how to work collaboratively with other schools and agencies to get the support that they need.
- Some may be using the zero tolerance policy to "elbow out" students whom they feel they no longer have time to work with.

In light of those issues, we discussed goals of short-term intervention and long-term prevention of student academic and behavioral problems. We advocate attention to high-quality educational research over sensational media headlines, working cooperatively, making a long-term commitment to address the problem, emphasizing the need for early intervention, and promoting reform to improve teacher training efforts.

- We can all impact legislation by encouraging elected officials to look at the empirical data and not just respond to media coverage of school-related issues.
- We should strive to work more cooperatively in and across school systems and with universities and state departments to create opportunities for redesigning the structure and culture of our schools.
- The most critical need is to create nurturing and safe learning environments, and this should be a long-term commitment. It is clear that we should look for early warning signs of problem behavior and take precorrective steps to minimize the likelihood of most serious student misconduct (Walker, Colvin, & Ramsey, 1995). Several discussants acknowledged that reactive strategies show we are doing something, but questioned whether these strategies really help to reduce student misconduct. Others expressed concern that too much money is being spent on reactionary strategies and not enough on early intervention programs. It follows that we must give all educators more preservice training on how to be proactive and give general education teachers more training in special education.
- We should recognize that precorrective strategies may not always work and that we must have a plan in place when students cannot get back into school, one that ensures that they have access to alternative schools and rehabilitation. These students must have a safety net (i.e., a process that will provide education and services while the student is out of school), and other agencies should assist in providing it when needed. This means developing systems of care that link agencies with the student's family and the resources that they need (Stroul & Friedman, 1986).

The group agreed that functional behavioral assessment and positive behavioral supports play an important role in establishing and maintaining safe and effec-

tive schools for all students. Further discussion identified several key issues in increasing acceptance of positive behavioral supports and functional behavioral assessment in schools:

- We first need to look at the infrastructure of our schools and how we can change it to create a host environment that is conducive to positive academic and behavioral supports for all students.
- When school personnel look at the assessment process, they need to understand the reasons behind changes in disciplinary practices to address student behavior.
- We must create an environment in which school personnel accept that students should be taught coping skills situationally and contextually. If we try to teach these skills outside of the context in which students can apply them, we will not succeed (Lewis, this volume).

Disciplinary and Instructional Practices That Ensure Safe and Effective Schools

There was general agreement that what we have been doing is not working and that we must find the courage to address student misbehavior in our schools in a fundamentally different way. Students who have come to depend on aggressive or other forms of aversive behavior need to have the reinforcers removed and a behavior taught that is of equal or greater value to them (Walker et al., 1995). To help accomplish this goal, there are policies that we can implement at the building level to help create positive and supportive environments to bring about positive changes in student behavior. One obstacle is that the structure and culture of our school beliefs about students seem to condemn them to failure; our typical response to aggression is reactive, not proactive (Van Acker, 1995). When students do not do well in our programs, it may be a reflection on our current practices, not just the severity of the behavior itself (George, this volume). It follows that before we can redefine the structure and culture of our schools, we must redefine our role in perpetuating student misbehavior.

The group offered a number of suggestions regarding what we as proactive professionals can do to help ensure safe and effective schools for all students. A major issue was current emphasis on punitive and negative response, the conflict between educational standards at the state level and promoting positive learner outcomes, the inflexibility of zero tolerance policies, and the lack of time to implement and assess replacement strategies for the behavior that impedes the teaching/learning process.

- School personnel need to recognize that most current responses to student misconduct are negative and punitive. Indeed, 90% of our school-based interventions are punitive and negative consequence based. Participants agreed that we need to increase efforts to distance ourselves from these punitive interventions. Furthermore, there is ample evidence that suspension and expulsion do not change student behavior. We feel strongly that schools must make dramatic and fundamental changes in their thinking about discipline, and, given the magnitude of the task, we need to redouble our efforts to disassociate ourselves from restrictive interventions.
- A major force behind our current thinking about student discipline is the movement for greater and greater educational accountability. We must find a way to reconcile the goal of higher standards with what it means to be responsible for the success of *all* students. Dealing with the issue of safe and effective schools, we must find ways to reconcile the apparent but somewhat elusive multiple challenges of creating safe, effective, and nurturing schools and simultaneously trying to promote positive learner outcomes. While schools are held accountable for performance standards that should be high for all students (National Research Council, 1997), we are all accountable for each student's performance and for integrating students with behavior problems into our classrooms.
- Zero tolerance policies limit our ability to respond individually to a problem situation because they take away the discretionary decision making that school administrators should have in dealing with student misconduct and lead to more punitive responses (Nelson et al., 1999). We need to recognize that all problem situations are different and judgments regarding appropriate responses should be based on the facts at hand. Participants acknowledged that it is easy to point an accusatory finger at the parent, teacher, or administrator, but in many instances students behave better when we can respond appropriately to their behavior.
- Given the high-stakes nature of the problems we face, school personnel need new tools with which to respond to challenging behavior in our schools. We recognize that changing the behavior of students who are disruptive takes time. We still must have some reactive strategies and consequences to deal immediately with disruptive behavior. In that over 90% of student behaviors are learned in response to the context in which they occur, neither suspension

nor expulsion adequately addresses disruptive behavior. Clearly, alternative responses are called for.

- The strategies that we give these students to maintain appropriate behaviors must work within the social, environmental, and structural context in which misbehaviors occur. For these students, their misbehavior is part of their survival skill, and it is important that we understand the significance of the replacement strategies that we give them (i.e., replacement behavior must be seen as more effective, more efficient, and more relevant to satisfying a student need).

Our discussion led us to identify emerging student-specific, class-wide, and school-wide best practices as an important part of changing the climate and culture of our schools to create safe and effective learning environments. The group identified the following as elements to consider when identifying those best practices:

- A modest but growing number of programs have been shown empirically to be successful in addressing learning and behavior problems in schools. Programs such as the High-Five Program in Louisville, Kentucky, combine high content with high expectations and support school-wide reform efforts that target disadvantaged-youth-aligned program expectations with real-life experiences for both teachers *and* students (Jefferson County Public Schools, 1994).
- It is essential for school personnel to integrate academic and nonacademic interventions. For example, the use of social skills instruction, cooperative learning, and anger management strategies is extremely important to the success of all students. Furthermore, once we succeed in promoting positive changes in student behavior, we need to find more ways to promote the maintenance and generalization of these positive behaviors.

It is best practice at the classroom level to create safe and effective learning environments and to make our instruction more relevant to students by motivating them, helping them acquire new skills, making instruction "real," and helping students generalize those skills to other settings. Programs that combine school-wide interventions, individual behavioral interventions, and professional collaboration can significantly reduce the disruptive behavior of students with behavioral problems (Nelson, 1996).

The consensus of this group was that the more professional collaboration, the better our options for creating safe and effective learning environments. We weighed options involving a collaborative approach across settings that emphasize replacement strategies for inappropriate behavior, integrated curriculum, preservice and inservice teacher training, and support for empirically validated programs. We generated the following recommendations for accomplishing that goal:

- Schools should have district-level, building-level, and classroom-level systems in place to serve the needs of our students. An integrated approach is needed wherein systems overlap to ensure a more comprehensive delivery of services.
- We need different strategies for different students who display inappropriate behavior. For example, young students may respond more positively to verbal praise, whereas older students typically tend to need more intensive interventions (e.g., contingency contracts, curricular accommodations). In any case, it is essential that we find replacement behavior that serves the same function as the disruptive behavior and systematically teach it to the student.
- We must work toward an integrated curriculum from prekindergarten on that provides both academic and nonacademic instruction as ways to proactively teach self-control, problem solving, and social skills.
- At the preservice and inservice level, we must give professional educators and others who work with students strategies that reinforce appropriate behaviors, and we must help them to understand their role in promoting the continuation of positive changes in student behavior.
- We must advocate continued funding of new programs that promote collaboration as well as dissemination of successful outcomes that are supported by empirical research.

School–Community Partnerships to Ensure Safe and Effective Schools

Current policies have served to distract many of us from recognizing key elements that can help us implement positive behavioral and academic supports for our students. It is imperative that we address the policy issues that impact our field and seek best-practice methods to help us succeed in creating positive learning environments to facilitate student development and growth (Simpson, 1999).

Promoting collaboration across professions and settings will help to create a positive, safe, and nurturing school environment for all students. To succeed, multiple private and public agencies must work together at various levels in a culturally competent manner and provide ongoing collaboration and support within and

across systems. To strengthen these collegial efforts, we must incorporate at the preservice and inservice levels practical strategies that school personnel can use at the individual student level, classroom teacher level, and building level-strategies that effectively reduce or eliminate disruptive behavior but are simple to understand and implement in schools.

In examining those elements that can help to forge more effective school-community partnerships, the group identified a number of concerns that should be addressed to ensure safe and effective schools:

- There is not enough emphasis on early intervention strategies for children who are at risk even though there has been an increase in the number of studies that include young children and document successful early intervention plans (Dunlap, Clarke, & Steiner, 1999).
- Ongoing analysis of variables that negatively impact effective school-community partnerships should be identified. When we focus on the data in each district, we can examine and work on possible solutions by a process of elimination, determining where our priorities are and how to use our limited resources in the best way for a given situation.
- There is a need for fiscal support for programs that emphasize precorrection and early intervention.
- As professionals, we need to share more information about initiatives that are working and communicate our successes to each other (Pratt, 2000).
- There is a need to examine agency guidelines (e.g., requirements for entitlement) to ensure that we meet the guidelines set by our mission statement and fill the gaps in agency policy that are excluding students in need.

In examining the role and function of various school and nonschool personnel in ensuring safe and effective schools, we addressed the following concerns:

- Many new principals are receiving training in educational leadership skills that will help them to work collaboratively with their staff and those outside the school. This is a positive trend that should be encouraged. School districts should continue to monitor and support high-quality preparation of school personnel to work together cooperatively.
- We must take an active part in the process of collaboration and work toward eliminating any barriers to building positive school environments. Furthermore, we must work with and understand the needs of the families of our students and learn to work with them in a nonthreatening manner to accomplish common goals.

What does the future hold for improving collaborative relationships across school, home, and community settings to ensure positive academic and behavioral outcomes for all students? This group discussed a variety of concerns regarding this major issue:

- First, we must recognize that collaboration benefits adults as well as students. Teachers do not always have ownership of the collaboration process, and they should be shown the benefits they will receive from collaboration (e.g., collegial support, professional networks). It is also important that teachers understand not only the negative impact that students with E/BD can have on their classrooms, but also emergent best practices for addressing student needs in ways that reduce or eliminate the problem (Lewis & Sugai, 1999).
- It may be counterproductive to have various teams collaborating simultaneously. Having one superordinate, interactive team structure that is school wide, class wide, and pupil specific would be more effective and efficient.
- We need to disassemble longstanding barriers to professional collaboration across settings, and we should begin at the micro level (e.g., building-level teams).
- We should be anticipatory and precorrective and try to work collaboratively within and across disciplines to create a host environment that is conducive to people's recognizing early warning signs of student problems and working collaboratively to eliminate the sources of the problems.

Conclusion

In summarizing our thoughts, participants felt it important that, in seeking the best solutions to ensuring safe and nurturing schools for our students, we avoid being swayed by media reports and other hyperbole. Instead, we must strive to make sound program decisions based on empirical research. It was the consensus of this group, when examining positive academic and behavioral supports for all students, that our focus must be proactive instead of reactive; we must work collaboratively across settings; and we must reach out to other agencies, professionals, and families, as well as the larger community.

We understand that for many students it is shortsighted and counterproductive to simply focus on learning and ignore behavior; the two go hand in hand. Notwithstanding the magnitude of the challenge facing those who work with students with E/BD, we must seek out emerging best practices (understanding that some

strategies take time to show positive results), recognize that continuous problems may be symptomatic of system failures, seek to promote acceptance of responsibility for the success of all students, and encourage others to do the same.

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At Promise for Success: Improving Academic and Behavioral Outcomes for Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders

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Nationwide, a premium has been placed on creating safe, effective, and nurturing schools for all students. As evidenced by the discussion of the participants at the Working Forum on Positive Academic and Behavioral Supports sponsored by the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders, the message is clear: We are all stakeholders of change and our charge is to reestablish our schools as positive environments for learning. Throughout the Forum, the overarching theme was a commitment to finding ways to achieve positive academic and behavioral outcomes for all students, especially for those students identified with emotional or behavioral disorders (E/BD). The following discussion relates to specific issues and concerns raised by the Forum participants.

A Mandate for Safe and Effective Schools

Safe and effective schools are of great concern to all educators, but they are of particular interest to those who work with students manifesting behaviors that impede their learning or the learning of others. Federal legislation and a number of national initiatives have served to bring the issue of safe and effective schools to the forefront of public awareness. At the same time, there is mounting recognition of the need to abandon traditional disciplinary practices and embrace a proactive approach toward building safe and effective schools. However, as several Forum participants asserted, this shift represents a tremendous challenge for educators and the public alike.

What legislative and education reform initiatives contribute to the growing demands and challenges facing educational personnel?

Group participants began with a discussion of early legislation (i.e., the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, P.L. 94-142; Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act) and then moved to more recent legislation, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA, P.L. 105-17). This new legislation has highlighted a number of changes that must be made in educational practices, including the significance attached to the general education curriculum. Specifically, Section 614 of P.L. 105-17 explicitly connects the individualized education program (IEP) of students with disabilities—including students with E/BD—to the content of the general education curriculum. Turnbull and Cilley (1999) cited the following provisions of the IEP from IDEA 97:

- Emphasis on access to the general curriculum for children with disabilities;
- Presumption that students with disabilities will participate in state and local assessments and the IEP team must justify the exclusion of a student;
- Need to report the progress of students with disabilities as often as progress of nondisabled peers;
- Need to provide related services and supplementary aids in order for students with disabilities to benefit from instruction and participate in the general curriculum; and,
- Placement of students with disabilities in the general education curriculum, and in the "least restrictive

environment" (LRE), and requiring the IEP team to justify any other placement (e.g., self-contained classroom).

The group discussed several other issues associated with the development of a positive educational environment for all students. These issues included (a) the national standards reform movement, which has increased pressure on teachers to ensure student learning; (b) the increasingly diverse student population, which has increased the importance of individualized instruction that is relevant and applicable for all students; and (c) the reluctance of some teachers to provide appropriate supports to students with learning needs that interfere with their ability to participate in the general education curriculum.

What are the most critical issues relating to addressing student behavior that impedes the teaching/learning process?

The group readily identified a range of student behaviors that impede academic success (e.g., failure to complete assignments, classroom disruption). However, solutions to ameliorate these behaviors did not come so easily. A number of the participants suggested that if inappropriate student responses are learned, perhaps educators should look for ways to provide (a) instruction, (b) practice, and (c) reinforcement of more appropriate and acceptable responses. While this answer seems simple, these practices will require a major philosophical shift in classroom instruction. Traditionally, a "one size fits all" approach to academic instruction has been imposed on all students, regardless of individual needs (Baker & Zigmond, 1990). Even so, a growing body of research demonstrates that appropriately providing instruction, practice, and reinforcement helps focus the teaching/learning process on the knowledge and skills students need to be more successful in the school and in the community. Group participants identified a number of common obstacles to incorporating a proactive approach, including (a) the lack of social skills instruction, (b) the lack of problem-solving and critical thinking strategies, and (c) the failure to account for the differences in students' experiential backgrounds. The consensus of the group was that failure to address these obstacles sets the stage for classroom and school-wide behavior problems.

What goals should we hold for short-term intervention and long-term prevention of student academic and behavior problems?

The group participants offered a number of solutions that address both short-term intervention and long-term prevention of student behavior problems. For example, the group emphasized creating a learning environment to meet the needs of all students (e.g., creating novel and relevant lessons that promote student interaction). Participants identified a series of important factors that contribute to a systematic approach to delivering high-quality instruction and consistent application of classroom management strategies. These factors included (a) appropriate teacher training with continuous skill renewal and mentoring, (b) a shared vision or philosophy, (c) time to plan and prepare for instruction, (d) availability of personnel and instructional resources, and (e) emphasis on and acceptance of creativity and novelty in the classroom (Kameenui & Carnine, 1998).

In some cases, preservice teacher training has failed to provide the tools needed to address an increasingly more diverse student population. The participants discussed at length the need for high-quality inservice training as well as a mentoring program. One participant stated that she was involved in a mentoring program, the Teacher Assistance Program (TAP), in her school district. The program is designed to give beginning teachers support in all areas, but particularly in the areas of classroom management and instruction.

Schools that share a common vision and philosophy often are more successful than others in meeting the needs of all students. Some participants identified the shared vision of their school as a very basic concept, such as "All children can learn," while others stated that their school's shared philosophy was spelled out in detail by means of a series of educational goals. Regardless of the degree of detail, the likelihood of success increases if a common goal is established.

The increased demands on teachers to provide high-quality programs has brought the issue of time to the forefront. Participants stated that the lack of time to plan and prepare for instruction is a major barrier to successful programming. Several of the participants offered suggestions for how their school might address the problem. Late arrival and/or early dismissal and the use of roving substitutes or teachers were two of the suggestions offered.

Likewise, the availability of resources continues to pose a barrier in many educational programs. A number of the participants stated that it was more than just having the resources available, but also knowing how to access them that was needed. Often the resources are available but are not known to all the staff; therefore, some teachers struggle needlessly.

Finally, creating a learning environment that fosters and encourages both teacher and student creativity and novelty is critical in the development of high-quality instruction. Many participants stated feelings of being stifled by the stringent objectives in their school divisions. Others countered that they felt challenged to maintain their creativity by the very same objectives. However, there was universal agreement that students

and teachers alike benefit from creative and novel lessons in the classroom.

Disciplinary and Instructional Practices That Ensure Safe and Effective Schools

Historically, discipline and instruction have been considered separate tasks that have no real effect on each other. Today, linking aspects of instruction to issues of behavior in the classroom seems to create a synergy. As educators, we often fail to understand that behavior problems, not unlike problems in reading or math, can result from errors in learning. One member of the group offered the following analogy. As teachers, we would never think to take the reading book away from a student who was struggling with learning to read and then direct the student to "let us know" when he or she was ready to read better (at which time we would return the book). Yet that is often precisely what we do when dealing with behavior problems. That is, the student is simply instructed to behave "better," with little or no effort to re-teach or remediate existing behavioral deficits (Bullock & Gable, 1999). According to participants, the routine instruction of appropriate student behavior must be embedded into the fabric of daily classroom instruction. To accomplish that goal, teachers must develop daily lesson plans that include both academic and nonacademic objectives, and actual instruction must allow the teacher to emphasize skill development across a variety of domains (e.g., social, cognitive, motor).

What appears to be wrong with our schools and/or missing in our current practices that hinders efforts to address student behavior that impedes the teaching/learning process?

The group participants identified two common classroom practices that have deleterious effects on student behavior. The first is the practice of so-called crisis management, or simply reacting to the problem of the moment with no plan for preventing problems before they arise. The second deleterious practice used by teachers is simply to remove the student—"getting rid of the problem" regardless of the reason(s) behind the student's behavior.

Several participants stated that most teachers with whom they work are prone to react to any inappropriate behavior in the classroom. For instance, teachers are much more likely to attend to a student's inappropriate behavior than to a student's behaving appropriately; in other words, "the squeaky wheel gets the grease." Unfortunately, this crisis-oriented approach generally is ineffective in changing student behavior and may actually create larger problems. Although in some cases a teacher must act quickly to address classroom events, this crisis reaction is far less preferable than that of preventing a problem from occurring. In many instances, immediate responses are necessary, but the absence of data on the problem behavior and lack of planning for intervention decrease the likelihood that the intervention will be effective. Thus, teachers who rely on crisis management are less likely to be objective, and the lack of planning contributes to inappropriate teacher responses. In contrast, teachers who systematically plan for and prevent the reoccurrence of inappropriate behavior are much more likely to have well-managed classrooms. Proactive approaches that emphasize appropriate behavior through instruction, practice, and reinforcement hold promise for effecting positive behavior change, whereas simply reacting to inappropriate classroom behavior may be the consequence that maintains the behavior or response.

The second common inappropriate practice identified by the group was student removal from the classroom or learning environment. The group participants overwhelmingly agreed that physically removing the student continues to be the most prevalent intervention for inappropriate behavior in the classroom. The practice has been given many names (e.g., quiet spot, exclusionary time out, thinking chair, in-school suspension). Regardless of the name, the outcome is the same—the student is removed from the learning environment. A simple scenario was offered for the group to consider. If a student is removed from instruction for only 5 minutes per day, based on 180 days in a school calendar, the student misses 18 hours of instruction in a school year. Can any student in need of high-quality education afford to miss 18 hours of instruction?

Perhaps educators need to understand that simply removing a student from class does little to teach or encourage the use of a more desirable response. Several participants argued that often the desired response may not be in the student's repertoire. For that reason, a more appropriate response to a student who manifests inappropriate behavior would be to teach the student a more acceptable behavior and allow him or her to "try it on and check the fit." In other words, introduce the new skill, allow the student to practice the skill, and provide the student reinforcement for engaging in the new behavior (i.e., instruction, practice, reinforcement).

What are the emerging school-wide best practice options for creating safe and effective learning environments?

The group participants expressed reservations concerning the ways schools have chosen to create safe, effec-

tive learning environments. Several of the participants stated that in their school districts safe-school practices are a result of the public outcry for more intrusive and restrictive measures designed to "ensure" a safe environment. For example, there is increased use of security, motion detectors, metal detectors, and clear book bags. Unfortunately, many of these practices have not proven to be effective and may serve to perpetuate inappropriate student behavior (Lewis & Sugai, 1999).

The participants agreed that the climate of the school sets the standard for the classrooms in the school. School-wide programs such as "Caught Being Good" and "Star Student" were identified as ways to promote desirable student behavior in a variety of situations, both academic and nonacademic. Such programs allow each student to be recognized for his or her contribution to the well-being of the school. All successful programs provide positive reinforcement for students who engage in appropriate behavior.

Participants unanimously agreed that social skills instruction was needed in the schools. They stated that too often only those students who are identified with disabilities are provided with such instruction. It was evident, based on the discussion, that the participants believe that many students, both with and without disabilities, do not learn social skills incidentally; therefore, social skills must be taught. Furthermore, as Mathur and Rutherford (1996) stated, it is critical for social skills instruction to be embedded in the daily instruction of all students. This increases the likelihood that students will be exposed to appropriate models of target behavior and that regular opportunities for students to use these skills in the setting are available.

What are the emerging classroom-level best practice options for creating safe and effective learning environments?

In agreeing that some school divisions may be moving in the right direction, participants discussed strategies that they have used in lieu of crisis management or other, more intrusive and restrictive, measures for dealing with inappropriate student behavior. The concept that the group developed is that appropriate teacher instruction corresponds with appropriate student behavior. Research suggests that as many as 50% of student learning and behavior problems are school induced (Gable, McConnell, & Nelson, 1985). To remedy that situation, a number of the participants discussed the use of positive approaches in the delivery of instruction. Several called attention to the work of Deno (1998) and colleagues, who suggested that when teachers keep students engaged through novel and creative lessons there is less time for inappropriate behavior. Deno further hypothesized that student progress is incompatible with disruptive behavior. With Deno's work in mind, participants underscored the importance of creating an environment in which students can be successful and one in which every student has the opportunity to be reinforced for his or her performance.

Other strategies for creating safe and effective classroom environments were discussed. Maintaining high, yet appropriate, expectations in the classroom was suggested as vitally important. Too often, teachers feel compelled to hold students only to behavioral expectations—that is, "sit up straight, raise your hand, and wait to be called upon." Participants stated that other areas of expectation should include academic measures as well as appropriate classroom behavior. In addition, ensuring high rates of positive teacher-pupil interactions minimizes the need for coercion in the classroom. One way to accomplish this is to increase the number of teacher praise statements. A good rule of thumb is at least seven praise statements to every "nag" statement. Furthermore, research demonstrates that use of cooperative learning arrangements allows students to learn and practice academic and nonacademic skills. That is, each student may have specific objectives that he or she can work on independently or as part of the group. Some students will have specific academic objectives, while others might be working on social/emotional objectives. Student-mediated approaches have been shown to have a significant effect on learner outcomes. They include improved academic performance for students, promoting appropriate social interaction with peers through the use of peer-tutoring programs, and providing more engaging learning environments to afford less time for inappropriate behavior (Forness, Kavale, Blum, & Lloyd, 1997). In each case, the key elements are appropriate instruction, practice, and reinforcement.

What is the role of functional behavioral assessment and positive behavioral supports in establishing and maintaining safe and effective schools for all students?

The group participants felt strongly that functional behavioral assessment (FBA) serves as the basis for well-developed and effective positive behavioral supports and plans. Yet many in the group stated that this practice is not being used as a preventative strategy, but rather as a reactive measure to address student misbehavior. According to participants, many school divisions maintain a narrow interpretation of IDEA 97 and are not utilizing FBA as a tool to address impeding behavior as a preventive measure.

Many in the group suggested that FBA is regarded more as an event than as a systematic team problem-solving process. The fact is that FBA is a time-consuming and elaborate process involving a series of steps that

lead to the development of a behavioral intervention plan. Failure to begin with step one of the process greatly reduces the likelihood of producing an effective and efficient intervention plan. As indicated in the literature, FBA provides an array of information from a variety of sources to be analyzed, thus increasing the likelihood that resulting interventions will meet the needs of the student more effectively (Quinn, Gable, Rutherford, Nelson, & Howell, 1998). Another important point that arose from our discussion is that the FBA process need not be limited to students identified with disabilities. Taking a "best practice" interpretation of IDEA, the FBA process can and should be used to address both academic and behavioral problems of any student.

Along with FBA, the group participants emphasized the importance of considering the impact of effective instruction and classroom practices when collecting data. The group added that positive behavioral supports and plans need to reflect student strengths as well as areas of concern. In sum, Forum participants indicated that functional behavioral assessment and the development of positive behavioral supports and plans should be used as a proactive, team problem-solving strategy to address minor behavior problems before they escalate and disrupt the teaching/learning process.

School–Community Partnerships to Ensure Safe and Effective Schools

Interagency collaboration is vital in establishing a safe and effective school environment in which all students can thrive and be successful. Too often, professionals feel they are working in isolation; the result is a less than effective approach to addressing behavior problems. In contrast, cultivation of various collaborative arrangements among professionals can produce varied and innovative ways of addressing student behavior problems. It was obvious from the discussion that no single profession has all of the answers to the myriad questions surrounding today's students. Therefore, the need for interagency collaboration was highlighted as vital to the success of students with E/BD in particular, and all students in general.

What are some district-wide best practice options?

The group participants identified *collaboration* as a word they hear often but practice little. In that interagency collaboration was identified as vital to student success, the question arose as to why there has been such difficulty in implementation of the process. A number of group participants identified lack of resources as a major barrier to effective interagency collaboration. Also, teachers in the group identified the lack of information regarding available services as a significant barrier to interagency collaboration. Participants stated that there was no system in place in their districts to ensure that appropriate agencies were accessed as needed and that teachers need to be more informed regarding available services so they may better serve students and families. They suggested that a list of agencies and their services be made available to all school personnel and that scheduled training regarding service availability and access be initiated. Additionally, all participants wished to work collaboratively with their peers, but they indicated that there was little administrative support for collaboration within the building.

What are the roles and functions of various school and nonschool personnel in ensuring safe and effective schools?

Participants stated that all personnel who have contact with a student have a stake and play a part in the development of that student. According to the group, contact with students is not confined to the school building. It was suggested that many people in the community have an effect on students as well. The participants indicated that people in the community have an obligation to provide appropriate models for students. Of particular interest was the importance placed on the involvement of people outside of the school in developing effective positive behavioral supports and plans. Without doubt, supports and plans are far more effective if they are implemented consistently and include behaviors that are acceptable in settings other than school (Gable et al., 1998).

Without exception, participants valued the input they received from nonschool professionals. However, a barrier for teachers is their limited ability to access this information. Often there is a wealth of information missing from teacher data sources that could be extremely beneficial in helping a student to maximize his or her performance. The group emphasized that the likelihood of student academic and behavioral success could be increased dramatically by developing a more convergent and complete database.

What may the future hold with regard to improving collaborative relationships across school, home, and community settings to ensure positive academic and behavioral outcomes for all students?

All too often, when students misbehave blame is assigned without regard for solutions. Blame, for its own sake, is not very useful. The fact remains that unless and until everyone realizes his or her stake in

the intervention process, the solution(s) to student misbehavior will be hard to identify and even harder to implement. Group participants emphasized that professionals must change the way they think to value and appreciate the assistance of others. Collaboration is not a natural event for teachers; few have received formal training in collaboration, and even fewer have had the opportunity to practice the skills needed in a nonthreatening environment.

The participants strongly urged teachers to solicit support from administrators before they attempt to forge collaborative arrangements outside of the classroom. Even though collaboration is practiced in the classroom, support for collaboration must come from those in decision-making positions. As problems increase in severity and complexity, there is a need for increased collaboration between professionals both inside and outside of schools.

Conclusion

If schools are to be safe, effective, and nurturing places for learning, academic and behavioral supports must be provided. School safety has become a critical issue for parents, teachers, students, and administrators. Nightly, the media have reported high-profile events that add to the concern. Not surprisingly, only one-half of school children in the United States report feeling safe in their schools (Lewis & Sugai, 1999). Fortunately, there are a growing number of interventions that can be implemented successfully to alleviate student, parent, and social concerns. These interventions must be proactive. Proactive approaches mentioned by the group include, but are not limited to, (a) emphasis on the general education curriculum with access for all students; (b) increased teacher accountability; (c) social skills instruction; (d) providing appropriate instruction, practice, and reinforcement; and (e) using functional behavioral assessment. In pursuing these goals, we increase the likelihood of placing more students with E/BD at promise for success.

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Redefining the Structure and Culture of Schools to Create Safe and Effective Learning Environments for *All* Students

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Most public school personnel will attest to the fact that teaching is one of the most formidable and difficult of professions. The challenges are many and varied. School violence is in the forefront of the news on a daily basis. A succession of initiatives consume teacher time and energy. The growing diversity in student ability increases the need for more extensive planning and a wider range of teaching strategies. Children living in disadvantaged circumstances are most at risk for evidencing behavior problems and academic failure (Institute of Medicine, 1989; Kaiser & Hester, 1997; Pepler & Rubin, 1991). The future of these children rests in the hands of teachers struggling to strengthen links with parents and the community and find effective strategies to meet children's individual needs.

The need to address multiple factors that impact the early development of children's classroom conduct and academic performance is critical. Conduct disorder, detected in early childhood, frequently continues into adolescence (Loeber, 1991) and influences adult life outcomes (Loeber & Dishion, 1983). If left untreated, these early problems typically intensify upon entry into school, resulting in significant problems in social relationships with peers (Asher & Coie, 1990). Difficulties in everyday interactions in school, home, and community; poor academic performance; dropping out of school; substance abuse; and delinquency are all associated with the presence of childhood conduct disorder (Dodge, 1993). For these reasons, early intervention and prevention of behavior problems in school are critical. Across the country, educators, teachers, and policymakers face the growing challenge of creating school environments that provide children with the support they need to be successful in school and in life.

In what follows, we draw upon the discussion of participants in the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders Working Forum on Positive Academic and Behavioral Supports and focus on three aspects of the challenge to create positive academic and behavioral supports for children: (1) ways that changes in educational reform initiatives contribute to the growing demands and challenges facing education personnel and how these issues impede the teaching/learning process; (2) how current perspectives and best practices offer alternative options for creating safe and effective learning environments; and (3) steps that schools can take to improve collaborative relationships across school, home, and community settings to help ensure positive academic and behavioral outcomes for all students.

A Mandate for Safe and Effective Schools

Finding ways to effectively meet the needs of children and youth in our schools has become a national concern. Although there are a number of emerging trends for creating safe and effective schools, these trends have also created some policies that actually impede the process of change. With increased media attention on school violence, well-meaning professionals often react by making rash decisions (Lewis, this volume), usually in an effort to appease public outcry rather than to promote data-based practices that are positive, child-centered, and proactive ways to address student behavior (Quinn, this volume). The situation is worsened by a lack of regard for teachers, many of whom feel disenfranchised, overworked, underpaid, and in need of public support. Because most current interventions are not based on sound research, they usually have little chance of producing long-lasting results and fail to address the need for community-wide, comprehensive

interventions that are preventative and individualized for children (Quinn, this volume). These reactionary measures for delivering services to children often result in underidentification of young children with behavior problems and delays in providing needed services until child problems have become more pronounced and entrenched (Muscott, Baker, Lechtenberger, & Pullis, 1997).

Today, there is a critical shortage of both general and special education teachers who are capable of addressing diverse student needs. Finding the most effective ways to recruit and prepare teachers so they have the skills they need to be competent in the classroom is a paramount issue. Unfortunately, many teachers find that they are not equipped to meet the rapidly changing demands of the classroom. Furthermore, most teachers lack training in collaboration with other teachers, parents, administrative staff, and community agencies. Compounding the already challenging situation is a national trend for children to be required to achieve specific criterion levels on standard assessment measures and teacher accountability for child achievement on these measures. While many professionals support these reform initiatives, most teachers feel they lack sufficient time and administrative backing to make the changes needed to create safe and effective learning environments for all students.

Collaboration—both within and across agencies—is necessary for proactive change to occur so that schools are more effective for all students. Forum participants agreed that collaboration does not just happen; rather, it is a process that requires a common vision, support from administration, and a shared commitment by all persons involved. Several group members expressed the opinion that far too often the process is articulated without adequate time and resources for developing and implementing positive behavioral supports for children. Often, teachers, already overwhelmed with changing policies and procedures and struggling to align curriculum to standards of learning, lack the time and resources required to create innovative strategies to meet the needs of the children in the classroom. In short, it was the consensus of our Forum group that with all of the barriers that impede the teaching/learning process, it is imperative that school systems, teachers, and communities work together to find ways to ensure safe and effective classrooms for all children.

Disciplinary and Instructional Practices That Ensure Safe and Effective Schools

Traditionally, school-based disciplinary and instructional practices have been viewed as two separate entities; however, with the 1997 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 97), education personnel have been forced to look more critically at the relationship between student conduct and classroom learning. With IDEA 97, teachers must be prepared to develop, implement, and evaluate instruction for students with various disabilities in ways that facilitate both academic and nonacademic instruction (e.g., social skills, conflict resolution, self-control). Indeed, accumulated research indicates that a meaningful, well-developed curriculum, along with effective instruction and management techniques, may prevent academic failure and decrease inappropriate classroom behavior.

Current Practices That Hinder Efforts to Address Student Behavior That Impedes the Teaching/Learning Process

Inadequate curricular instruction, insufficient teacher training, ineffective professional collaboration, and varying administrative support were viewed as the most significant issues impeding the teaching/learning process for students with emotional or behavioral disorders (E/BD). Forum participants believed that many teachers are unaware of the direct relationship between academic failure and emotional and behavioral problems in the classroom; indeed, they go hand in hand. Relatively little attention is given to making academic demands that are commensurate with individual student ability. Despite the federal mandate for individualized education programs (IEPs), students with E/BD often are victimized by poor instruction and exposed to curricula that are not specifically aligned with their individual needs. Curricular and instructional accommodations and modifications necessary for students to be successful in the general education curriculum often are overlooked. As Baker and Zigmond (1990) asserted, student conformity takes precedence over instructional accommodation, resulting in disruptive, acting-out behavior and academic failure.

Members of the group suggested that an increasingly diverse student population highlights the fact that current teacher training efforts are unresponsive to the changing demands of the classroom. Today, teachers find themselves in situations that require a greater skill and knowledge base than they received in their preservice preparation. Accordingly, a unified, comprehensive general and special education training program—combining aspects of general and special education—was seen as a way to address the needs of both populations of teachers in training. A more integrated and overlapping teacher preparation program would better prepare all teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to implement high-quality, student-specific, classroom-level and school-wide instruction. Additionally, a more unified teacher education program would more adequately prepare all teachers to take steps to prevent and

intervene in response to early signs of student aggression (Gable & Van Acker, 2000).

As it stands, an alarming number of students with serious and persistent behavior problems are being educated by teachers who are ill-prepared to provide appropriate academic and behavioral supports (see Bullock & Gable, 1995). Suggestions for addressing this problem included (a) system-wide recognition of the magnitude of the problem facing school personnel; (b) replacement of reactive punitive interventions (e.g., suspension; expulsion) with more proactive systemic efforts (e.g., the High Five Program: A Positive Approach to School Discipline); (c) early identification and resolution of minor problems before they grow into serious challenges; and (d) redefinition of schools to create a host environment that is accepting and supportive of a diverse school-aged population.

Teaming was another key practice that Forum participants identified as being conspicuously absent from schools, yet vital to the success of students with E/BD. Group members suggested that collaborative training should begin at the university level; that is, both general and special educators must be taught how to establish and maintain effective collaborative relationships. The group felt strongly that the lack of collaborative interactions between general and special education teachers on behalf of students with E/BD resulted in fewer students being integrated into regular education classes and significantly decreased student success in the general education environment. Current estimates are that 80% to 85% of students with disabilities are being served within special classroom settings and that physical removal continues to be the most frequent classroom intervention. The group believed that this practice serves only to foster the notion that issues surrounding challenging behavior rest with so-called pull-out special education services rather than a school-wide intervention plan. Moreover, Forum participants acknowledged that most school personnel are unfamiliar with the use of universal (or standard) intervention strategies to effectively address the majority of school-related problem behaviors. Even now, most efforts to address student problem behaviors are based on reactive strategies and the imposition of punitive consequences (Conroy, Clark, Gable, & Fox, 1999).

Another opinion expressed by participants was that many schools lack clear and unwavering administrative support for positive disciplinary practices. Administrators are the backbone of the school and the driving force behind creating a school climate that is safe, supportive, and effective. To be effective, administrators must be willing to address issues such as a lack of time to address emerging issues, the need for technical assistance and high-quality educational materials (e.g., social skills curricula), even, as one participant put it, "rolling up their sleeves and getting involved in the day in and day out lives of their teachers and students." The teacher participants expressed concern that they are being required to implement multiple initiatives that often are incompatible with one another, adding to an already daunting task. Teacher expectations generally are additive and cumulative; the result is too little time to either fully learn or correctly implement teaching strategies for combating student learning and behavior problems.

Emerging School-Wide Best Practice Options for Creating Safe and Effective Learning Environments

In light of recent legislative mandates, some participants noted a slight shift in administrative support in their schools in favor of multidisciplinary teams supporting students with E/BD. The climate of these schools appears to encourage greater professional collaboration. Additionally, there seems to be a growing building-level awareness of the need for inservice training in high-quality teaming and problem-solving practices. Several teachers reported that team training in functional behavioral assessment and crisis management are two areas drawing significant inservice attention.

Although teacher reports of changes in schools hold promise for the future, current policies continue to support traditional refer-and-removal practices for students who pose behavioral challenges. The misguided belief that a so-called zero tolerance policy will decrease school violence and aggression is prevalent in schools nationwide (Gable & Van Acker, 2000). Unfortunately, there is little recognition that teacher behavior directly correlates with and exacerbates student behavior (Shores, Gunter, & Jack, 1993). Participants argued that more practitioners need to know that, by manipulating key contextual variables (e.g., physical arrangement of the classroom, instructional delivery, clarity of rules/expectations, teacher proximity to targeted students), teachers can prevent (or minimize) the occurrence of student misbehavior.

Emerging Classroom-Level Best Practice Options for Creating Safe and Effective Learning Environments

Participants concluded that the most significant factors associated with safe and effective schools center on appropriate curricular placement, relevant academic instruction, and consistent classroom management (Gable, McConnell, & Nelson, 1985). Additionally, participants suggested that a proactive instructional approach, one that systematically assesses and directly teaches both academic and behavioral strategies, is the most effective way to prevent learning and behavioral problems. Both academic and behavioral problems are

viewed as either errors in learning or skill deficits until there is evidence that the student has been taught the skills fully and correctly.

The group concluded that students must be directly taught the skills they need to access general education settings and that instruction is most successful if it is embedded into the context of daily classroom instruction. There was consensus that teachers of students with E/BD must implement instruction in ways that reduce student anticipation of failure while maintaining high levels of student interest and academic engagement. Participants suggested that cooperative learning strategies represent an effective tool for engaging students, individualizing task requirements, and decreasing student anxiety and, in turn, increasing learner outcomes. Finally, the group felt that students experience greater feelings of success with increased positive reinforcement coupled with high rates of positive student-student and teacher-student interactions (Shores et al., 1993).

Role of Functional Behavioral Assessment and Positive Behavioral Supports in Establishing and Maintaining Safe and Effective Schools for All Students

Many within the group recognized the potential value of functional behavioral assessment but conceded that many schools simply continue to address challenging behaviors from a topographical perspective (i.e., respond only to observable events). They argued that few schools have sufficient personnel with either the appropriate training or the time to conduct a thorough functional behavioral assessment. Consequently, assessments have been carried out in a modified fashion, which greatly jeopardizes the integrity and fidelity of the outcome. At best, functional behavioral assessment was seen by the group as a reactive measure for addressing inappropriate behaviors and therefore not utilized as a tool for proactively addressing impeding behaviors.

School–Community Partnerships to Ensure Safe and Effective Schools

There was general agreement that making schools safe and effective is not an isolated task for individual teachers, schools, or even school systems. Rather, it is a community, state, and national concern. Despite public outcry for school personnel to implement necessary changes to make schools safe and effective, change is often minimal, if it occurs at all. Change is not easy, but by working together it is possible to establish successful collaborative relationships for the good of the child, the school, and the community (Korinek, this volume). Collaboration is an evolving process. Participants concluded that there are a number of strategies that foster collaboration between schools and communities to ensure safe and effective schools, among them (a) a shared vision by all members of the team, (b) creative planning by building on the strengths of individual team members to provide time and resources needed to implement change, (c) inservice training for the collaborative process, and (d) starting the process.

Shared Vision

Characteristics of school-community cultures that foster positive working relationships include a shared vision of working together for the common good of each child (Hester, Kaiser, & CTGV, 1998), teamwork that is active and valued, mutual goals, openness, parity, respect, and trust among team members. The group agreed that teams need to cultivate administrative support, volunteer support, and teacher support. The most effective collaborative efforts also have the support of school districts and the community. In some areas of the country, schools have the combined support of businesses that donate time and money and allied community agencies, such as police, social workers, child protective services, mental health personnel, and the courts. Although collaboration across agencies initially is more difficult because of issues of territoriality, once agencies gain an understanding of what each is able to provide, it is possible to pool resources, time, and energy for the common shared vision of the team. Likewise, because the resources (i.e., materials, time, energy) necessary for change are in short supply, productive collaboration with other agencies includes not only participation by all in the planning and decision-making process, but also the sharing of resources and accountability.

Creative Planning

The group observed that a team is composed of individuals—persons who possess unique skills and strengths. Building on the strengths of each member makes it easier to meet the goals of the team. No one member is the sole repository of all knowledge and skills; rather, the team is a pool of resources that far surpasses any individual member. This human pool is often able to find resources and time when there seemingly is none. For instance, by rearranging schedules so that teachers planned for a smaller number of classes, one team created extra time for teachers to participate in the collaborative process. Another team had a floating substitute. Each member of the team, even administrative staff (though this may not be popular with all administrative staff) served as a substitute in the classroom, providing time for planning and implementing the shared vision

of the team. These efforts underscored the strong commitment to collaboration by all members of the team.

Inservice Training for the Collaborative Process

Participants reiterated that not all teachers have the necessary training to collaborate on behalf of students with E/BD. An initial step in the collaborative process is to address barriers to collaboration (Korinek, this volume). By building on strengths, sharing information and materials, providing opportunities for input and responding to the concerns of individual team members, providing incentives to participants, and acknowledging contributions, collaborative teams are strengthened. Participants affirmed that the voice of every team member is needed to change the culture of a school and make it a safe and effective learning environment for all students.

Not only is training in the collaborative process critical, it is also important to provide teachers with what they need to feel competent, respected, and supported in the classroom. Teaching is a lonely profession. At a time when there is a critical need for more qualified general as well as special education teachers, teachers need to be acknowledged, nurtured, and provided with ways to obtain the skills they need to address the growing diversity of the classroom. Teachers need to feel competent in promoting positive classroom behavior, as well as in strategies to deal with disruptive student behavior. Teachers need the skills to teach a diverse student population, students with a wide range of developmental abilities and skills. Furthermore, they need strategies to reach out to parents and others in the community to link school to home and to foster learning outside of the classroom (Hester & CTGV, 1998). And, they need a mechanism for alleviating the problem of professional insularity. Since not all teachers come equipped to meet these challenges, schools must provide ongoing inservice programs and opportunities for teachers and other personnel to attend conferences, take classes, or work together at the building level to develop these skills.

Starting the Process

We all would like to wave a magic wand to create the changes necessary to improve collaborative relationships across school, home, and community settings that ensure positive academic and behavioral outcomes for all students. However, such change does not come without hard work on the part of all team members. In beginning a process to produce a shared plan for addressing student needs, one can feel overwhelmed. What is important is that we take the first step, no matter how small, toward that goal. By working as a team day by day, week by week, month by month, year by year, the vision will move toward reality. Change is slow; meaningful system change can take 4 to 5 years. While it is hard to stay the course and be patient during that time, it is crucial that we remain dedicated to the task of working together for the good of each child.

Conclusion

Finding effective strategies to address school aggression and violence and enhancing connections with the community and with parents, while at the same time meeting criterion levels on standards of learning assessments, are among the most significant challenges facing schools today. However, there are strategies that can make a difference. Fostering positive academic and behavioral supports for children in school requires building on teacher strengths and giving teachers the skills, support, resources, and time they need to provide a high-quality education for children. That process begins with a shared vision—not just the vision of an individual, but a vision shared by an entire community working together to create a school and community partnership that accepts ownership and responsibility for each and every child.

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Is Violence as American as Apple Pie? Maybe There Is a Better Way

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A diverse group of professionals including general and special educators, administrators, consultants, and parents met during the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders' Working Forum on Positive Academic and Behavioral Supports. Forum participants critically discussed legislative mandates, as well as disciplinary and instructional practices in relationship to the challenge to ensure safe and effective schools for students with emotional or behavioral disorders (E/BD). That dialogue served as the framework for the following discussion.

A Mandate for Safe and Effective Schools

Some authorities say that violence is rooted in the social and economic changes that have swept the United States over the past two decades. Others believe that violence is just as American as apple pie. They further assert that teachers and students can become desensitized by the frequent violent images portrayed in the media. Teachers, parents, and those who work with youths feel both frightened and besieged by the media's portrayal of the latest child and youth atrocities, which often describe our young people in dehumanizing and racial terms. When asked to reflect on and respond to the current public school violence trend data, participants replied that there is a great deal of concern over the way information on school violence is collected and portrayed by the media. The media often lack accurate statistics, so that schools and individuals react negatively by making decisions based on myths. We need accurate data so that we can be more proactive in dealing with school violence. Finally, we need a better way of collecting and distributing information to assist in the decision-making process about our communities.

What legislative mandates (e.g., the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 [IDEA 97]), changing demographics, and education reform initiatives (e.g., increasing student achievement) are contributing to the growing demands and challenges facing education personnel?

Considerable discussion focused on mandates that are impacting our schools. These mandates include higher academic standards of learning, normative testing, and performance benchmarks. Feelings of frustration emerged in the participants' dialogue. For some, mandates pose unique and frustrating challenges. For others, mandates have been viewed as opportunities and motivators to reexamine existing practices. As a result of current reform efforts, it was generally agreed that discussion among teachers and administrators is intensifying regarding (a) student outcomes, (b) student exemptions from state-level exams, (c) Section 504 eligibility, and (d) appropriate implementation of IDEA 97. The stress created among students as a result of mandated standards was noted as well.

Some initial fears have dissipated among school officials as the assessment data reveal that if we raise expectations, students will respond by rising to those expectations, provided we make the general education curriculum and assessment process available to them. Unfortunately, some educators persist in the use of special education referrals rather than attempting to make changes in their instructional strategies.

What are the most critical issues that relate to addressing student behavior that impedes the teaching/learning process?

First, current reform initiatives have the potential to become major obstacles if we fail to establish appropriate and realistic expectations for our students. Second, and related to expectations, is the relevancy of the curriculum. This means we must examine content critically and ask ourselves what is important to teach, and we must relate that information to the school, home, community, and world of work. Third, the lack of a common planning time undermines collaborative efforts and a sense of student ownership. For special educators, little time is provided or set aside to discuss individualized education programs (IEPs) with general educators or to assist teachers with the implementation of learning strategies and modifications that, if not made, can result in student frustration and trigger challenging behaviors. Fourth, many students come to school without having their basic needs addressed at home (e.g., food, clothing, shelter, love, bonding).

As part of this discussion, participants were queried as to whether their students felt they were a part of their school. Those who respond positively shared ideas, strategies, and examples of strategies that foster that sense of belonging. Including students in intramural sports and other athletics and showcasing their "stardom" via school radio announcements and awards assemblies have reportedly resulted in positive changes in discipline. Finally, several participants indicated that mentoring programs have provided support and a renewed sense of value for some students.

As educators, what are the goals we hold for short-term intervention and long-term prevention of student academic and behavior problems?

Foremost, if we are to educate students, we need to keep them in school and not suspend them. Another goal is to provide the necessary support for students to reach the benchmarks that we are asking of them. For some of our students, the goal is just to complete a task and improve their academic performance. If we expect students to do well, we also must make a personal commitment to supporting them in efforts to achieve academic benchmarks. In addition, we need to do a better job of planning with students; too much time is spent planning "around the student" on the assumption that we know what is best. Students need to be included in the educational decision-making process and development of IEP goals. By doing so, we teach the importance of self-advocacy skills. Furthermore, curriculum and instruction must be aligned with assessment in order to have the greatest positive academic outcomes. The ultimate goal for students is to help them find success in school and beyond. Schools of all kinds (e.g., charter schools, home schools, private schools, public schools) need to be satisfying places as well as nurturing for the students.

Disciplinary and Instructional Practices That Ensure Safe and Effective Schools

Considerable discussion was devoted to the topic of disciplinary and instructional practices in the schools.

What in our schools may hinder our ability to address student behavior that impedes the teaching/learning process?

Participants discussed what may be wrong with and/or missing from our schools (e.g., enlightened perspectives on student discipline, teacher collaborative structures, high-quality curricula, instructional options) that hinders efforts to address student behavior that impedes the teaching/learning process. There was agreement on several issues that impact student outcomes:

- Students have limited preparation for the transition to elementary, middle, and high school. Little, if any, discussion occurs between the sending and receiving teachers in regard to student IEPs.
- Increased paperwork, coupled with little or no training in how to implement new mandates or reform mandates, continues to be problematic.
- More and more, we are dealing with discipline in the classroom. Often, teacher preparation programs—especially those in general education—fail to ensure that program graduates are competent in behavior management strategies.
- Limited alternatives exist to in- and out-of-school suspensions. Many alternative programs operate in a state of mayhem, which serves only to impede students' academic progress.
- Teacher attitudes and lack of understanding on how to relate to students with E/BD and to differentiate teaching according to student strengths and weaknesses continue to be problematic.
- Classroom instruction does not always promote active learning and engagement for students with E/BD.
- Most effective general education teachers often are given large numbers of students with E/BD without added support, which contributes to an already high teacher attrition rate.

- There is still a lack of parental involvement due to parents' own negative experiences with the schools.
- Many parents do not understand what special education is, how it works, or what services are available.
- Insufficient content-specific professional development activities are provided for general and special educators that focus on best practices.
- There is a need for general and special educators to raise expectations for students.
- There is a need to foster collaboration between university programs and school districts to determine what skills are needed by teachers of students with E/BD.

What are the emerging school-wide best practice options for creating safe and effective learning environments?

Participants shared several innovations for creating safe and effective schools. For example, some districts have established committees to develop school-wide discipline plans. Rules are kept simple, and all students earn marks or points for a set period of time (e.g., daily, weekly, every 3 weeks). Students are allowed to participate in a school-wide activity if the necessary points are accrued. A clean slate is begun each week to give students an equal opportunity to earn rewards and activity participation. Morale in the schools has reportedly increased for both students and teachers. Other schools are celebrating student successes via a weekly school-wide acknowledgment program. Students learn to acknowledge others publicly (e.g., "I would like to acknowledge . . . "; "I present this award to . . ."). Schools using this system have found that ceremonies and the establishment of traditions and celebrations are very important to students. Similarly, a weekly peacemaker—one who exhibits exemplary character traits—is acknowledged through nominations. The awardee receives a certificate and a photo and his or her name on the bulletin board.

State-level initiatives involve the piloting of school-wide projects. They begin by collecting information from teachers on existing problem areas and base interventions on those data. School-wide interventions for teachers and students are implemented based on information specific to a school campus. However, a majority of the participants were at "ground zero" with school-wide discipline planning. One participant said, "We feel we are taking a big step by coming to this conference this weekend. We will go back to our respective states and schools and provide professional development for our staff, administrators, and school population." It is important that everyone buy in to the school-wide action plan and learn how to complete a functional behavioral assessment. Others reported that they have started looking at the individual student needs and functional behavioral assessment data but are now moving into school-wide planning by linking and understanding student behaviors and environment. It was obvious from the discussion that schools are at varying stages in dealing with changing disciplinary and instructional practices.

What are the emerging classroom-level best practice options for creating safe and effective learning environments?

To respect others, students first need to learn to respect themselves. Social skills often are taught in general and special education. Token economies and behavioral contracting systems appear to be used widely in the schools—particularly in special education programs. Participants were asked whether they collected data on the use of interventions to ascertain their effectiveness on targeted behaviors. Few participants responded, and many of those collecting data were uncertain of the most appropriate use of those data. The importance of data collection and analysis was highlighted, and participants were encouraged to become informed about this process.

What is the role of functional behavioral assessment and positive behavioral supports in establishing and maintaining safe and effective schools for all students?

The process of doing functional behavioral assessments and developing positive behavioral supports requires a commitment to changing the culture of our schools. Many participants indicated that they were attempting to convince some teachers and administrators that functional behavioral assessment is a requirement. It was felt that some teachers find it easier and more convenient to overlook the behavioral challenges of the student than to conduct a functional behavioral assessment. A few participants indicated that their school districts have been conducting functional behavioral assessments for some time and have taken steps to train technical assistance teams to provide support at the building and classroom levels.

School–Community Partnerships to Ensure Safe and Effective Schools

Participants spent time examining school and community partnerships and how those partnerships can help ensure safe and effective schools. As part of the discussion, district-wide practices, the roles and functions of various school and nonschool personnel, and what the

future holds with regard to collaborative relationships were explored.

What current district-wide best practices are available?

Participants agreed that district-wide best practice options to ensure safe and effective schools are under way in some states through the creation of community partnerships. The following examples were cited:

- *Pre-FAPT.* The Pre-Family Assistance Planning Team serves students regardless of eligibility for services under E/BD. Counselors, probation officers, teachers, and other personnel work with students who are at risk prior to formal referral to the Family Assistance Planning Team (FAPT). This additional step becomes a proactive measure to provide assistance to both the student and family prior to crisis escalation.
- *Team Up.* Team Up, which is provided through the parks and recreation service, involves volunteers who provide games, outings, homework assistance, and peer monitoring to middle school boys.
- *Concept Key.* This is an after-school program coordinated through mental health services with tutoring provided by naval base personnel.

Others suggested that some schools have developed coordinated efforts between community agencies and the schools. Unfortunately, these services are often splintered, and information on the effects of these collaborative efforts and their impact on students is sparse. Various nonschool personnel (e.g., extended family members, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, police officers, community leaders) provide volunteer services in the schools.

What might the future hold with regard to collaborative relationships?

The participants were asked what they thought the future might hold with regard to improving collaborative relationships across school, home, and community settings to ensure positive academic and behavioral outcomes for all students. It was agreed that:

- Our schools are under fire.
- Policyholders and stakeholders need to be informed of and see first hand how reform initiatives are being implemented successfully.
- Problems in our schools need to be caught early. Early intervention is the key for complete support (e.g., identification, services, interagency collaboration).
- We must establish collaborative relationships among schools, agencies, parents, and students. Collaboration with teacher preparation programs, as well as the recruitment of competent teachers for students with E/BD, is a continuous challenge. Unfortunately, teachers of students with E/BD have the highest attrition rate. Lack of administrative support is one of the main reasons why teachers fail to stay in the field.
- Established support mechanisms must be in place during the initial years of career employment.

Conclusion

In all, our discussion focused on issues surrounding education reform, current disciplinary and instructional practices, and school/community/parent/agency collaborative efforts to ensure safe and effective schools for all students. Despite the problems with which we struggle as educators (e.g., needy children, reform mandates, assessment, training), we agreed that there are many positive changes occurring in schools. The renewed focus on establishing positive academic and behavioral supports to foster safe, effective, and nurturing schools for all students promises to be a positive, proactive rather than a negative, reactive approach to working with students.